



Ministry of Justice



**New advice about the information
and support you should get if you
are a victim of crime**

Have your say



Easy Read version



Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice wrote this information.



We are the part of the government that makes sure there is a good and fair criminal justice system in England and Wales.



The criminal justice system is all the services involved in law, crime and punishment working together.

What is in this paper



What this paper is about

1



Understanding the needs
of victims

5



Talking with child victims

8



Information about your case

10



Making it easier for victims
to take part in the criminal
justice process

13



Helping victims understand
their rights under the Code

17



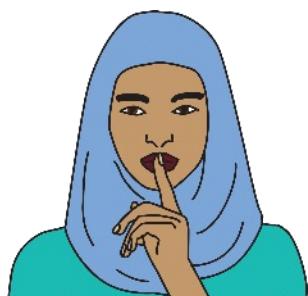
Extra information

22



Equality

23



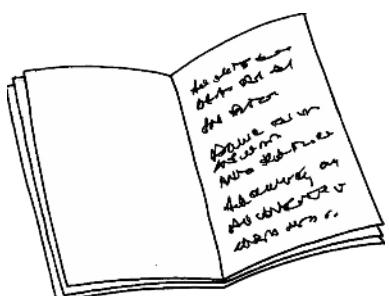
Confidentiality

25



Our contact information

26



What the words mean

27

What this paper is about



The Victims' Code

The Victims' Code says how the criminal justice system will support **victims**.

A **victim** is a person who is harmed because of a crime.



Victims need:

- information to help them understand how the criminal justice system works



- to be told about support services



- the chance to explain the impact of the crime



- be allowed to challenge decisions which affect them.



A law in 2024 said we need to update the Code.

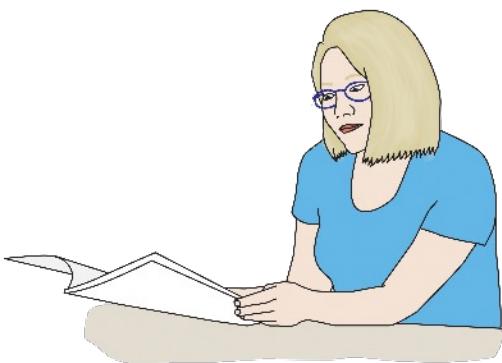


This paper tells you about changes to the Code we think would be helpful.



Our consultation

A **consultation** is when we ask people to tell us what they think about our ideas.



We want you to read this paper then tell us what you think.



We want to hear from:

- victims, their families and people who help them



- services that help victims



- people who work in the criminal justice system and people who work with victims every day.



People can write to us, email us or come to one of the meetings we will hold.



This paper is mainly about people in England and Wales but people from anywhere in the UK can take part in our consultation.



We have written a Welsh language paper.

Understanding the needs of victims



This part is about new advice and training for staff working in the criminal justice system, including police, so they can:



- understand the needs of victims

and



- help victims through the criminal justice process.



Criminal justice agencies or police will check what support you need. This is called a **needs assessment**.



We know sometimes a person's needs are not checked properly.



We want you to tell us ways to improve:

- the way police assess your needs



- when they should talk to you about your needs



- how criminal justice agencies use this information.

The College of Policing is going to train:

- supervisors so they can help police officers follow the Code



- new police officers.



We want you to tell us ways to improve how police work with you.

Talking with child victims



We want to work out the best ways for criminal justice agencies to talk with child victims.

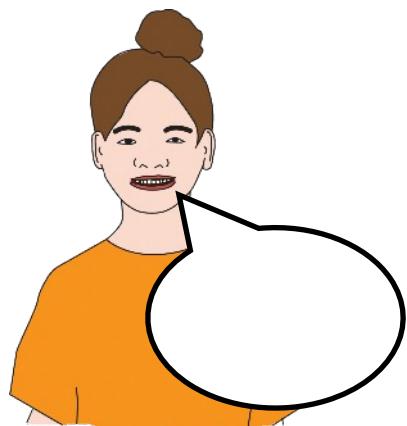


Give children a say

Children have different needs to adults.



We have heard that children do not always receive the help or information they need. This makes them feel they have no power.



We want children to have a voice.



One way to give children a voice is for criminal justice agencies to talk with them.



We want you to tell us how we can make this happen and how parents and carers can speak up for their child.



Child victims will still be protected. They will not have to talk to parents or carers who we think may be involved in a crime against the child.



We want to know what you think of our ideas about giving child victims more of a voice.

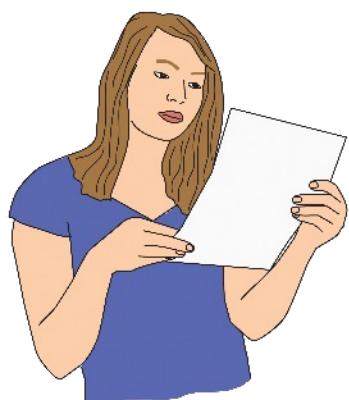
Information about your case



The crime you've told the police about is called a **case**. The police will tell you the case number.



You have a right to get information about your case.



We know some services only give people the minimum information.



This leaves people feeling left out of the criminal justice system.



We think people need information in the right way and at the right time.



People have different needs

We know that people have different needs.



Some victims will only want to know basic updates such as appointment dates.



Other victims may need ongoing information.

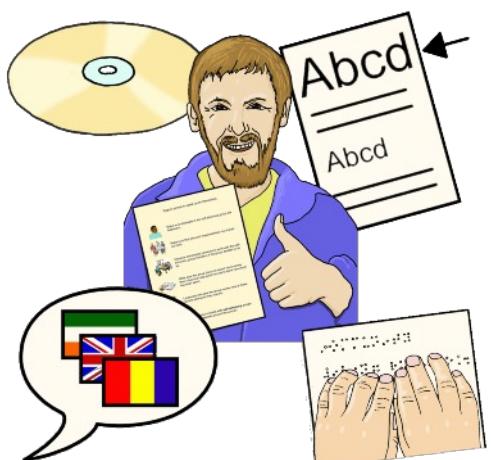


Some people have been affected by **trauma** so it is important for services to be careful about sharing information about their case.

Trauma is the physical injury or emotional pain you feel after something upsetting has happened to you.



There can be a lot of information and some people need time to think about it.



We want you to tell us the right ways to communicate with victims about case information during the criminal justice process.

Making it easier for victims to take part in the criminal justice process



The court system can feel strange and scary.



We want victims to have information and support during the criminal justice process.



The Victim Impact Statement

The Victim Impact Statement lets a victim say how the crime affected them.



The court uses the Victim Impact Statement as evidence when they are deciding how to punish the **offender** for the crime.

The **offender** is the person who hurt you.



Many victims say they cannot remember being asked if they wanted to make a Victim Impact Statement.



Or they did not understand what it would be used for.



We think the Code should have more information about how the Victim Impact Statement works.

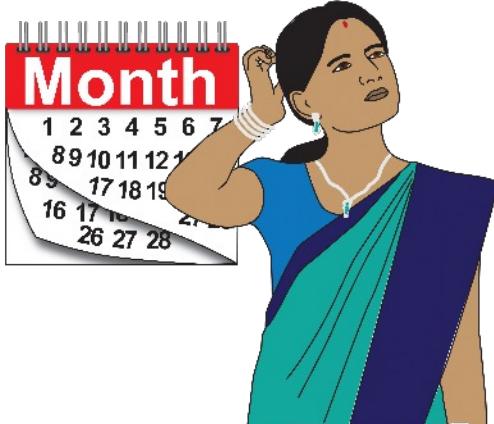


Giving information at the right time

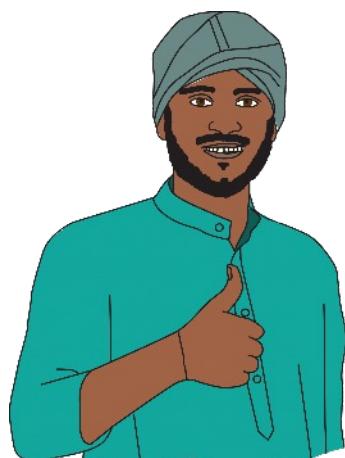
Victims need information at a time and in a way that suits them.



Some victims can take part in the Victim Contact Scheme. The Victim Contact Scheme will ask if you want information about the case.



But you may need more time to decide if you want this information.



You can tell us if you agree with our ideas about making it easier for victims to take part in the criminal process.



We are also asking you to tell us if and how a victim should take part when the Parole Board is thinking about whether and how to release an offender.

Helping victims understand their rights under the Code



Knowing about the Code

We know that only about 2 in 10 people know about the Victims' Code.



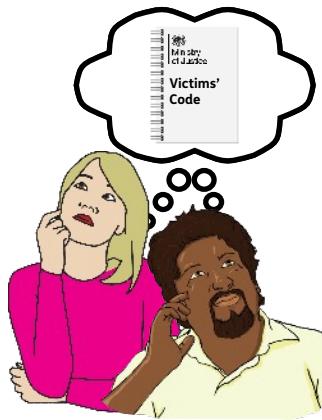
We want to make sure you know about and understand your rights under the Code.



We want you to understand what support you can access to help you through the criminal justice process.



We expect criminal justice organisations to tell the public, victims and those supporting victims about the Code.



Helping people understand the Code

We have some ideas about helping people learn more about the Code.



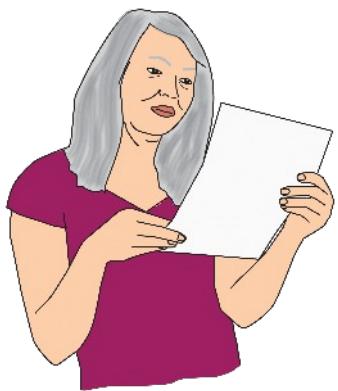
For example in 2025 the Government ran a program called Understand your Rights.



The program linked people to the Victim and Witness Information website.



We will run this again in 2026.



You can tell us your ideas about:

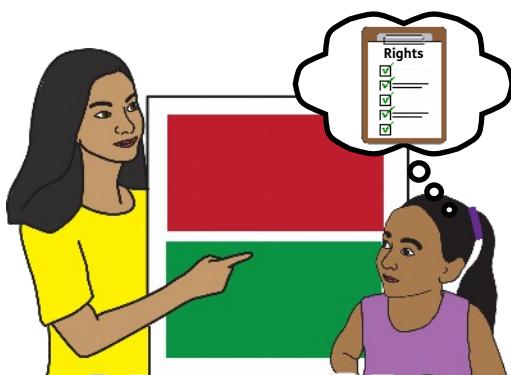
- making the Code easier to follow



- when victims should be told about the Code

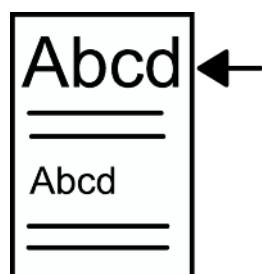


- ways we can build awareness of the Code



- ways we can help child victims understand their rights.

Accessibility

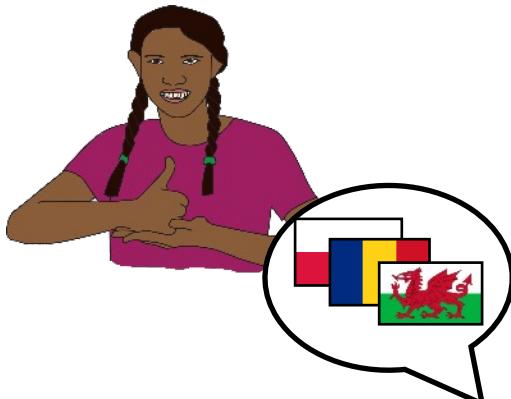


The Victims' Code:

- is available in large print and easy read



- works with screen readers



- is translated into British Sign Language and the 15 most spoken languages in England and Wales.



The Code is a long document.



The Victim and Witness Information website provides a short version of the Code and signposts readers to accessible information.

Extra information



In the new Code we have added information and moved things around to make it clearer.



We would like you to tell us what you think about the changes.

Equality



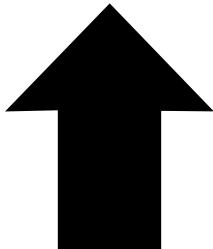
Government departments must think about how we support equality.



For example, we need to treat people of different races, people with and without disabilities, and men and women, equally.



We try to make it easy for all victims to get the support and information they need to deal with the criminal justice process.



We know we can do more.

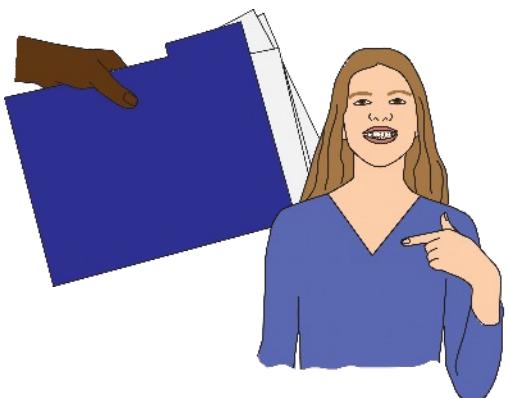


We want to know how our ideas will affect people with the protected characteristics of disability race, sex, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.

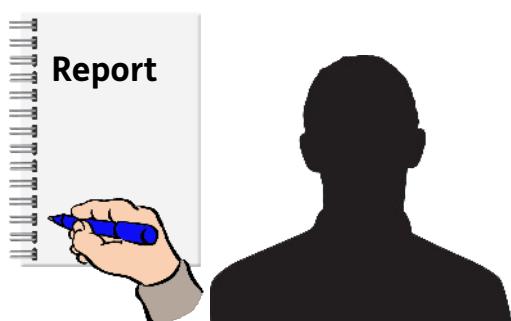
Confidentiality



There are laws that tell us how to look after your information.



We will look after your personal data.



We will look at what people have told us and write a report. We will not publish your name or details that could identify you.



If you want the information that you give us to be treated as confidential, please tell us why.

Our contact information



If you want to let us know what you think about our consultation, please send your response by **30 April 2026** to:



You can email us at:
victims.code@justice.gov.uk



Write to:
Victim and Witness Policy and
Strategy Team
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

What the words mean

Consultation is when we ask people to tell us what they think about our ideas.

Case the crime you've told the police about. The police will tell you the case number.

Criminal justice system is all the services involved in law, crime and punishment working together.

Ministry of Justice are part of the Government that makes sure there is a good and fair criminal justice system in England and Wales.

Needs assessment is an assessment to check what support you may need to take part in the criminal justice process.

Offender is the person who hurt you.

Sentence is the punishment for doing the crime.

Trauma is the emotional pain you feel after something upsetting has happened to you.

Victim is a person who is harmed because of a crime.

Victims' Code says how services must support victims.

Victim Impact Statement let's a victim say how the crime has affected them.

Credits



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Ref ISL257 25. January 2026.

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