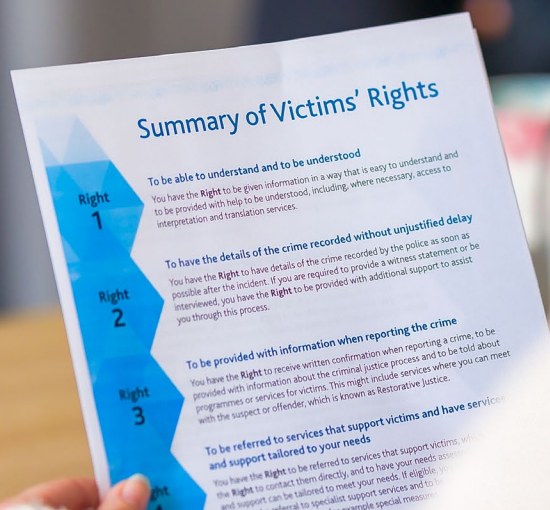




Leicestershire
Police
Protecting our communities

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.



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

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 intimidated 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.

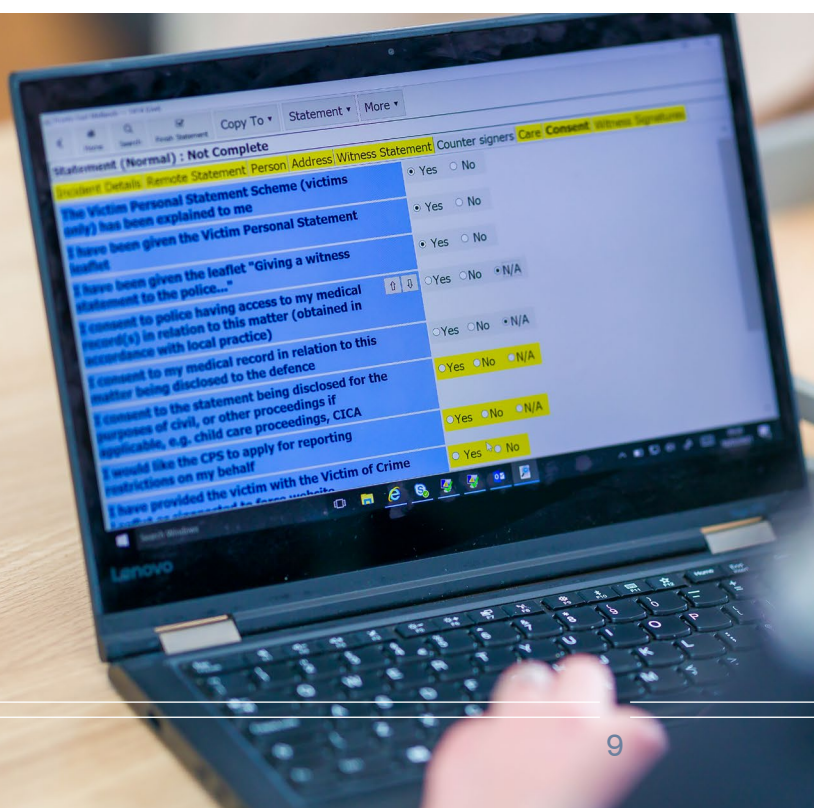
All victims of crimes are entitled to make a VPS if they wish to do so.

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: