

The Victims Charter



VictimsCharter.ie

Table of contents

Overview	3
Section 1: Working with victims of crime	4
Section 2: Crime Victims' Helpline	6
Section 3: An Garda Síochána	9
Section 4: Fiosrú the Office of the Police Ombudsman	23
Section 5: The Courts Service	29
Section 6: Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	40
Section 7: Irish Prison Service (IPS)	46
Section 8: Parole Board	56
Section 9: Oberstown Children Detention Campus	59
Section 10: Central Mental Hospital	65
Section 11: The Probation Service	72
Section 12: Legal Aid Board	77
Section 13: The Coroner	82
Section 14: Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal	90
Section 15: Department of Foreign Affairs	96
Section 16: Victims and the law	100
Section 17: Victim Support Services	113

Overview

This Charter describes the criminal justice system from a crime victim's point of view. It sets out your rights and entitlements to the services offered by the various State agencies working with victims of crime.

Section 1: Working with victims of crime

Section 1 defines what is understood by 'victim' and tells you about the sections in this document.

Sections 2 to 15

Sections 2 to 15 inclusive give an overview of the following:

- the role of each service
- what you can expect from that service – the services they offer and how you can expect to be treated
- what you can do if the service does not meet your expectations.

Section 16: Victims and the law

Section 16 gives a general summary of victims and the law.

Section 17: Victim support services

The final section, 17, contains some useful contact details.

Please note that this Charter is only a guide. It is not a legal document and does not give you any legal rights. The legal rights which you have as a victim are mainly set out in the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act, 2017. Further details on this Act and Victims and the Law are provided in Section 16: Victims and the law.



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Section 1: Working with victims of crime

What is a victim?

The Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act, 2017, section 2(1) and 2(2) defines a victim as follows. A 'victim' is:

1. a person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss, which was directly caused by a criminal offence;
2. family members of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offence and who have suffered harm as a result of that person's death.

Family members do not include family members who have been charged with or are under investigation in connection with the death.

How organisations named in this Charter work

Clear language for everyone

The organisations who work with us and are named in this Charter will speak or write to you in clear and easy-to-understand language. They will take account of your ability to understand and to make yourself understood.

These organisations will be sensitive to your needs if you cannot read or write very well.

They will provide an interpreter and translation if English is not your first language so that you can take part in an investigation or act as a witness in court.

They will take your specific needs and requirements into account if you have any type of disability.

The organisations who work with us will treat you with dignity and respect, whatever your:

- gender
- race
- religious beliefs
- ethnic origin
- sexual orientation
- age
- nationality
- disability
- economic circumstances
- marital or family status or
- if you are a member of the Traveller community.

When you contact any of the organisations named in this Charter, please tell them what your specific needs are, so that they can try to address them.

Each organisation will always aim to give you the information you ask for, but sometimes, under the law, they may not be free to give you certain information if it might:

- interfere with a criminal investigation
- damage a criminal case before the courts, now or in the future
- endanger someone's personal safety
- endanger the security of the State.

Only an authorised person can decide not to give you information for any of these reasons.

Section 2: Crime Victims' Helpline

The role of the Crime Victims Helpline

The Crime Victims' Helpline is an independent charity that provides information and emotional support to victims of crime and all those affected by crime. We are here to listen no matter:

- when the crime took place
- who committed the crime
- whether or not the crime was reported to the Gardaí.

We understand the issues and difficulties that victims of crime must deal with. Our trained staff and volunteers provide non-judgmental and confidential support.

We are funded by the Department of Justice. This Department funds a wide range of organisations that support victims of crime, and we can give you contact details for these organisations.

Further information on victim support services is provided in Chapter 16 of this Charter.

What you can expect from the helpline

When you contact our helpline, we will keep your information confidential.

We can tell you about your rights.

We will give you time and space to talk about your experience of the crime and listen with empathy. We won't judge you.

We can give you information about support services in your local area for victims of crime. We can tell you about specialist services for victims of particular crimes like:

- domestic violence
- rape
- sexual abuse
- murder.

We can answer your questions about the criminal justice system and can help you contact the Gardaí. We can also help you contact other agencies and services

We can give you information about compensation, if this applies to your case.

You can tell us as much or as little as you like

When you contact us, you can tell us as much or as little as you like. You don't even have to give your name if you don't want to.

You don't need to have a particular reason to ring us, or a particular question you want to ask. You might just want to talk, and that's fine – we are here to listen. And, we will be here for you if ever you want to contact us again.

Contact details for Crime Victims Helpline

Freephone:	116 006. (Mon-Sat) See website for operating hours.
Website:	www.crimevictims helpline.ie
Email:	info@crimevictims helpline.ie
Text:	085 133 7711
Webchat:	www.crimevictims helpline.ie

If we do not meet your expectations

You can contact us at the details below if we do not meet your expectations, and you would like to:

- ask questions
- make suggestions
- make a complaint about our service.

Where to complain or make suggestions

Address:	CEO Crime Victims Helpline, 6 - 7 Hanover Street East, Dublin 2, D02 W320.
Phone:	01 408 6116, or 116 006
Email:	info@crimevictimshelpline.ie
Website:	www.crimevictimshelpline.ie

Section 3: An Garda Síochána

The role of An Garda Síochána

The mission of An Garda Síochána is 'Keeping People Safe'. This is the guiding principle on which we base our strategic and operational decisions.

An Garda Síochána is a victim-centred police service. We focus on:

- keeping people safe
- protecting the most vulnerable
- providing a consistently high standard of service.

We respond to the needs of victims and local communities and take account of the evolving nature of crime.

The functions of An Garda Síochána are to provide policing and security services for the State through:

- preserving the peace and public order
- protecting life and property
- protecting the human rights of each individual
- protecting the security of the State
- preventing crime
- bringing criminals to justice, including by detecting and investigating crime.

What you can expect from An Garda Síochána

When you report a crime, we will investigate it in a timely way with the aim of bringing those responsible to justice.

We are committed to maintaining a supportive relationship with you, and we will work to address your concerns and needs.

We will try to make sure that we effectively meet your legal rights to information, advice and other appropriate assistance.

In supporting you, we aim to be courteous, helpful, and professional. All members of An Garda Síochána will treat victims with dignity. We will respect your:

- gender
- race
- religious beliefs
- ethnic origin
- sexual orientation
- age
- nationality
- disability
- economic circumstances
- marital or family status
- membership of the Traveller community (if this applies).

We partner with community groups, voluntary organisations and other statutory agencies so we can support you as much as we can.

What happens when you report a crime?

If you are the victim of a crime and you report it to us, we will:

- respond in a timely manner to your call
- investigate your incident.

We will give you the:

- name, phone number and station of the investigating Garda
- PULSE incident number.

PULSE is our computer system where we log the details of the incident and enter any updates to the investigation. The 'PULSE incident number' is the number we give to your incident so that we can quickly find the details and any updates of your case.

Staff at our dedicated Garda Victim Service Offices will acknowledge your report of the crime. They will keep you informed of significant developments during the investigation.

You can find contact details for Garda Victims Service Offices by visiting:

www.garda.ie/en/victim-services/find-my-local-victim-service-office/

- The information and support we offer

As a victim, we understand that you might need help and support. Therefore, when you report a crime to us, we will offer you information on a range of supports and services for victims.

Here is a list of the topics we will offer you information on. Each topic is explained briefly.

What you can do

As a victim, when you first come in contact with us, we will offer you information about:

- how to report an incident to us
- your role as a victim in the criminal justice process.

Services for victims

We will tell you about appropriate support services for victims in Ireland.

We will also tell you how to get interpretation and translation services, if you need them.

Special supports

We will tell you about special supports and practices that you might find helpful, for example:

- bringing someone with you to the Garda Station to report a crime
- being interviewed by someone of the same gender.

Compensation

We will explain the compensation schemes available and the court's role in awarding compensation.

You can read more detailed information on compensation in Section 13 of this Charter. It covers the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.

Legal aid and expenses

We will give you information about how to access legal aid and if you are entitled to expenses in certain circumstances.

You can read more detailed information in Section 11: Legal Aid Board.

Who you can bring with you when making a complaint

We will tell you about your right to be accompanied by a person of your choice when you report an incident to the Gardaí for the first time.

You also have a right to be accompanied during any interviews with you. We need to interview you so we can investigate the alleged offence.

Sometimes, a member of An Garda Síochána may reasonably believe that it would be against your best interests to have a particular person with you. Or they may believe it would harm any investigation or criminal proceedings. They may then stop that person from accompanying you. This includes when you are reporting incidents to, or attending interviews with, An Garda Síochána.

If that happens, you can choose someone else to accompany you.

While we are investigating your complaint

While we are investigating your complaint, you can ask us for details of any significant developments in the investigation. We consider significant developments to include:

- arrest and charging of a person
- naming the nature of the offence with which they are charged
- release on bail of a person (temporary release while waiting for their trial)
- their remand in custody (when they are sent to jail when they are awaiting their trial)
- details of court dates, including the time, date and location of court
- information on any release of a person
- their escape from custody.

During our investigation, you can ask for a copy of your statement about what happened.

As part of our investigation and with your cooperation, we will assess your needs as a victim, to find out if you are vulnerable to:

- retaliation (where you may be at risk from people as a result of your report to us)
- intimidation (when other people try to influence you)
- revictimisation (when you are caused added distress as a result of the investigation of your crime and your experience in court).

If we identify any concerns, we will make special arrangements to make sure that you feel as comfortable as possible during the trial. This could include arranging for you to enter and exit the court building through a private route – not open to the public.

In addition, subject to the court's approval in each case, these special arrangements could include:

- excluding the public or certain people from the court
- allowing you to give evidence through a live television link.

If you are a visitor to Ireland

If you are a visitor to Ireland and you are the victim of a crime, we will, with your consent, refer you to the services of the Irish Tourist Assistance Service.

If you were the victim of a crime abroad

If you were the victim of a crime in another country and wish to report it, you can report it to your local Garda Station. We can refer the details of this crime to the authorities in that country.

If you are a victim of a sexual offence

If you are a victim of a sexual offence, we will show special sensitivity to you and will:

- provide, if we can, a Garda of the same gender to interview you and take your statement
- provide, if we can, a doctor of the same gender if you ask us to
- give you details about support organisations for victims of sexual offences.

Children

We recognise that the needs of child victims always need special consideration.

If you are under 18, to help you as a child victim of crime we will tell you of any particular:

- things we will do
- procedures
- arrangements.

We will always take your best interests into account.

We will respect your views and consider them, bearing in mind your age and understanding. We will also provide for your parent, guardian or other authorised person to accompany you, as appropriate, when attending interviews or at court.

We will keep you up to date on the progress of your case through your parent, guardian or representative.

Victims of domestic abuse

In cases of domestic abuse, we will take action to protect victims and any of their family members who may be under threat from any abuser.

We will make sure to give victims appropriate information, support and protection in line with their needs. For example, we won't send written updates about your case to your home if this could threaten your safety.

We will also tell you about available support services.

Older people

If you are an older person who has been the victim of a crime, we will take all reasonable steps to protect and reassure you. We will also offer you advice about home security and your safety in the community. This may mean that we will arrange for the local Community Garda and Crime Prevention Officer to call to you to offer advice and support.

Specific needs or communication needs

If you have any form of disability, we will take any specific needs or requirements into account.

We will make sure that all our communications with you are in clear language.

If, for any reason, you have difficulty being understood or understanding our communications with you, we can arrange support.

For example, if you are deaf, we will arrange for a professional sign language interpreter.

Please let us know if you have any particular needs and let us know if there are particular supports we could provide to help you.

Foreign language

If you are not fluent in English or Irish, we will, as far as possible, provide a free interpretation and translation service so that you will receive the same quality of service as any victim of crime.

When you report a crime, we will, as far as possible, direct you to our Victim Information Booklet in your own language. It contains all the information you will

need. We can provide this in paper copy if requested.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities

If you are a member of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities, we will manage your case with sensitivity and respect. Where appropriate, we will also refer you to a Garda Diversity Officer within An Garda Síochána.

Racist incidents

If you are a victim of a racist incident, we will:

- accurately record the incident
- investigate your complaint
- put you in contact with the Garda Diversity Officer in your area.

Crimes committed by children (under 18 years of age)

Sometimes a child has carried out the crime you have reported. If so, we will consider your views when the Chief Superintendent of National Juvenile Office decides if the child should be included under the Garda National Youth Diversion Bureau.

[Garda National Youth Diversion Bureau - Garda](#)

They will also consider things like the recommendation of the local Juvenile Liaison Officer.

The Youth Diversion Programme is designed to help children who have committed offences. The child must admit that they were involved to avoid being formally charged and prosecuted in court.

If admitted, the child will receive a warning about their behaviour and be cautioned (warned). They may also be supervised, by their local Juvenile Liaison Officer, for a period of time.

We may invite you to:

- be present if we are cautioning (warning) the child
- a Garda Family Conference.

At a Garda Family Conference the child who was involved in a crime or anti-social

behaviour meets with a Garda and other people like the child's parents and/or guardian. The meeting will discuss the effect of child's behaviour on the victim, the community and the child's family.

The Family Conference aims to develop a plan to help the child to avoid getting into further trouble.

We will uphold your interests as a victim whether you are present or not at either of these events.

Where a child is considered unsuitable for inclusion in the Diversion Programme, an investigation file may be submitted to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution. This office considers whether or not to start criminal proceedings.

Restorative justice

Restorative justice is when a voluntary meeting can take place between:

- a victim
- an offender
- an independent person skilled at managing this sort of meeting.

At the meeting, you can tell your story. This means that the offender can see the consequences of their crime and – as much as possible – repair the harm they have caused. This can give victims a voice. It can also get offenders to take responsibility for what they have done and make amends.

If they prefer, victims and offenders can also communicate through the independent person rather than meeting each other face-to-face. If the victim and offender do choose to meet face-to-face, they should be asked if they would like to bring anyone to support them.

If you are a victim of crime and the offender is under 18, you could be invited to take part in restorative justice. This would allow you to say how you feel and to ask the offender questions that would show them how they have affected you.

If you are a victim of crime and the offender is over 18, An Garda Síochána should give you information about restorative justice, if this is an option in your case.

If you or a family member are the victim of a serious crime

You or a family member may be victims of certain serious crimes like:

- murder
- road collision
- kidnapping
- serious assault.

If so, we may appoint a Family Liaison Officer to support and guide you through this traumatic time.

The Family Liaison Officer will tell you about significant developments in the investigation and give you information on other appropriate support services available to you.

An Garda Síochána decisions on prosecutions

What happens after you report an incident

When we investigate crimes, we gather all of the evidence around the incident in a fair, honest and impartial manner.

For less serious crimes, we will bring the case before the District Court on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

For more serious crimes, the DPP may ask that the case is heard in a higher court, with the permission of the judge.

If the offender is a child, we will decide if they are suitable for the Garda Youth Diversion Programme rather than being brought to court.

When you report an incident to An Garda Síochána, we investigate the incident and decide whether or not we should prosecute the person. We will then write to you to let you know what we decided. Sometimes we tell you this in person. If we decide a crime is more serious, we send them to the DPP. The DPP then decides whether or not to prosecute.

For certain offences, including drunkenness and public disorder offences, an adult offender may receive a caution (warning) rather than face prosecution. However, the offender must acknowledge responsibility for their behaviour before they are considered for a caution.

How we work with the Director of Public Prosecutions

If we think we should prosecute, we submit an investigation file to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) about the incident you reported to us. The DPP will decide whether to start a prosecution or not. We will notify you of the DPP's decision.

Section 6: Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions shows how the Office of the DPP decides to proceed or not with a case.

A decision not to prosecute

You may receive a letter telling you we do not intend to prosecute. If this happens, you may ask for a summary of the reasons why. If you are not satisfied, you can ask for the decision to be reviewed by:

- the Superintendent at the Garda Station where your incident was investigated
- or where appropriate, by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

There are time limits on requesting a summary of reasons or a review of the decision.

Time limits for summary of reasons not to prosecute

You must ask for the summary within 28 days of receiving the letter or information telling you we do not intend to prosecute.

To ask for a summary of reasons, you must complete:

- Request Form – Summary of Garda reasons not to prosecute.

You can get this form at any Garda station.

Time limits for review of the decision not to prosecute

If you want us to review our decision not to prosecute, you must ask for a review within 56 days of receiving the letter or information telling you we do not intend to prosecute.

To ask for a review, you must complete:

- Request Form – Review of Garda reasons not to prosecute.

You can get this form at any Garda station.

These time-limits (28 days or 56 days) may be extended where An Garda Síochána or the Director of Public Prosecutions, are satisfied that it is needed.

As the European Union's Victims Directive came into effect on 16 November 2015, you can only request a Review or a Summary for incidents reported after that date.

Being a witness

If you are a victim and appearing in court as a witness, you are entitled to certain things.

Meeting the prosecutor

Where possible, you may meet the prosecutor who is presenting the case in court. The prosecutor is a lawyer who works for the State. It is their job to prove in court that the suspect committed the crime they are accused of.

Where you wait in court

You can ask court staff if you can wait in an area away from the suspect and their family and friends.

Special services

You can have special arrangements made for you like arranging for you to enter and exit the court building through a private route closed to the public.

In addition, with the court's approval, these special arrangements could include:

- excluding the public or certain people from the court
- allowing you to give evidence through a live television link.

Having your questions answered

You will be introduced to someone at the court who can answer your questions about what is happening in the case during the trial.

Giving a Victim Impact Statement

If a person is convicted of the crime against you, you can make a Victim Impact Statement setting out how the crime has affected you. More information on Victim Impact Statements can be found in: Section 16, Victims and the Law.

Witness expenses

The Gardaí are responsible for paying witnesses' expenses. This is the cost to you of coming to court to give evidence. These expenses may include the cost of travelling, meals and, in some cases, accommodation.

The Garda Superintendent in the area where the case is being taken will pay your expenses. The Garda dealing with your case can handle this for you. They may ask you for receipts for your expenses.

In some cases, you may be able to get an advance on expenses before the case so that you can travel to court.

If we do not meet your expectations

You can contact your local Garda station if we do not meet your expectations and you would like to:

- ask questions
- make suggestions
- make a complaint about our service.

Ask for the officer in charge or contact the Garda Victim Liaison Office.

How to contact the Gardaí

Your local Garda station:	Their contact details are available at www.garda.ie
Address:	The Garda Victim Liaison Office, An Garda Síochána, Garda National Protective Services Bureau, Harcourt Square, Dublin 2, D02 DH42.
Phone:	01 666 3349 01 666 3453
Email:	crimevictims@garda.ie We monitor the email address during business hours, and we will respond to your query as soon as possible.
Website:	www.garda.ie

If you wish, you may also refer your concerns, or make a complaint to Fiosrú

More information is in: Section 4, Fiosrú the Office of the Police Ombudsman

Contact details for Fiosrú

Address:	150 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1, D01 FT73.
Phone:	LoCall 0818 600 800 or 01 871 6727
Email:	info@fiosru.ie
Website:	https://www.fiosru.ie

Section 4: Fiosrú the Office of the Police Ombudsman

The Role of Fiosrú

Fiosrú the office of the Police Ombudsman (previously GSOC) was set up in 2007 to deal with complaints against Gardaí.

Any member of the public can make a complaint to the Commission about a Garda. We handle these complaints in different ways depending on what it is about.

Our office also investigates incidents where a complaint has not been made but where we think it is in the best interest of the public to do so.

We must also investigate any incident where a person may have been seriously injured or died while they were in contact with Gardaí.

What you can expect from Fiosrú

We aim to treat the people who make complaints to us in a sensitive and understanding way. We try to resolve the issue as fairly as possible.

Our key values

Our key values are:

- putting the public interest first
- respecting the human rights of everyone with whom we deal
- making decisions based on a thorough and fair analysis of evidence
- being open and transparent by communicating and explaining our actions
- being committed to providing a high standard of public service.

For further information please visit our website [Home - Fiosrú](#)

What happens when you make a complaint to us?

If you are a victim of a crime that you think has been committed by a member of An Garda Síochána against you, we will:

- acknowledge your complaint in writing within one week of receiving it
- carefully consider your complaint and make an independent decision about whether we can investigate it or not
- give you information about relevant supports available to you from other agencies – emotional, legal or other
- tell you what type of investigation we will undertake
- write to tell you if we decide not to investigate your complaint and tell you why.

How we will investigate your complaint

Interview you

We will interview you as soon as we can, in a way that is sensitive to your needs and in a place that we think is suitable for you.

If you wish, you can bring another person to support you during the interview, unless we think the person you choose would not serve your best interests. If we tell you the person is unsuitable, you can choose someone else.

Gather evidence

We will gather the available evidence in a fair and impartial way.

Assess risk to you

We will assess whether you need special protection. If you do we will let you know the possible options open to you.

Tell you what you need to do

We will let you know what will be required of you during the investigation.

Keep in contact

We will keep in regular contact with you to let you know how the investigation is going.

We will always give you contact details so you can contact us if you need to.

What happens after Fiosrú investigates your complaint?

Following a Fiosrú investigation, we will do some or all of the following, depending on the case.

Send a file to the DPP

We will send a file on the investigation to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). We will ask them for a direction on whether a criminal prosecution should take place.

Tell you the DPP's decision

We will let you know the DPP's decision. If the DPP decides not to prosecute, you can ask for the reasons why, either through us or directly through the DPP.

If the DPP decides to prosecute, they will let you know what you can expect to happen during that process. They will either make direct contact with you to tell you this, or they will ask us to tell you. We will keep you informed of any court dates; or other information we think you need to know before attending court.

Send a file to the Garda Commissioner

We will send a file on the investigation to the Garda Commissioner to see if the Garda authorities agree that Garda personnel should be disciplined or not. We will let you know what you can expect to happen during that process.

Close an investigation

If there is not enough evidence available to send a file to the DPP or to the Garda Commissioner, we will close the investigation. If we decide not to continue with the investigation, we will tell you why in writing.

How Fiosrú will respond to your needs

At all times, we aim to be courteous, helpful, respectful and professional. If you are upset about a crime or other traumatic incident, we will respond to your needs in a caring and sensitive way.

How Fiosrú hopes to meet your needs

Listen to you

We will give you the opportunity to make a complaint. We will respond to your concerns and treat you fairly and with respect.

Process complaints efficiently

We will do all we can to ensure that you have confidence in our decisions.

Be professional and courteous

We will abide by the principles of quality customer service, do what we promise to do and do our best to give you the right information in a timely way.

Be open and honest at all times

We will answer your questions as fully as we can.

Protect your privacy

We will keep accurate records of your dealings with us and keep those records safe.

Be accessible

We will be available to answer your questions in person, by phone, by letter or electronically.

How Fiosrú responds to different categories of complainants

Fiosrú recognises that different categories of complainants might need additional supports.

Victims of sexual offences, gender-based violence or violence in a close relationship

We will treat you with special sensitivity and we will:

- if you wish, assign your complaint to a Fiosrú officer of the same gender
- if you request it and if it is possible, provide you with a doctor of the same gender
- provide you with details of support organisations for victims of sexual

offences.

Families of people who have died following contact with Gardaí

In cases of this type which come under our responsibility we will provide you with a Family Liaison Officer. They will keep in contact with you. If you have asked any other person to help you, the Officer will also keep in contact with them. The Family Liaison Officer will be able to give you information about support services.

Fiosrú, the Office of the Policy Ombudsman, will make sure that you receive the same information and treatment as any other complainant.

Children

If you are under 18, Fiosrú will respect your views and take them into account while bearing in mind your age and understanding. We will take your best interests into account when making decisions which concern you.

We will:

- explain our processes
- provide you with a special interviewer if you need one
- ensure your safety and protection
- comply with the guidelines under Children First.

Children First is the National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

We will keep your parent, guardian or representative informed, and if you wish, we will also keep you up to date.

Specific needs

If you have any form of disability, we will take specific needs or requirements you may have into account.

If you have difficulty with reading or writing, we will be sensitive to your needs.

If you are not fluent in English

We will provide a free translation service so that you will receive the same quality of service as far as possible.

If we do not meet your expectations

You can contact us at the details below if we do not meet your expectations and you would like to:

- ask questions
- make suggestions
- make a complaint about our service.

How to contact Fiosrú

Address:	Corporate Services, Fiosrú, 150 Upper Abbey Street, Dublin 1, D01 FT73.
Phone:	0818 600 800 01 871 6727
Fax:	01 814 7023
Email:	info@fiosru.ie
Website:	www.fiosru.ie

Section 5: The Courts Service

Role of the Courts Service

The Courts Service manages all the different kinds of courts in Ireland. The guide at the end of this section lists the different kinds of criminal courts and what they do.

The Courts Service must, by law, take account of the needs of court users, including witnesses and victims of crime. The Courts Service Act, 1998, sets the roles and responsibilities of the Courts Service. It describes what we should do.

The Courts Service:

- manages and administrates the courts
- provides support services for judges
- provides facilities for court users
- manages and maintains court buildings
- considers the needs of court users when developing policies and strategies to carry out our work to a high standard.

Court users include crime victims.

When we cannot comment or intervene

Please note that we cannot comment on or intervene in any way in matters related to the giving of evidence by victims or sentencing. These are matters for the judge. The judge is independent in carrying out their functions, subject only to the law and the constitution.

You can only address a judge's decision through the courts, for example, through an appeal.

Victims of crime and vulnerable witnesses

What you can expect from the Court Service

The Courts Service aims to look after the needs of victims of crime and vulnerable witnesses by providing the following facilities and services.

Dedicated rooms

Victim waiting rooms are available in almost all refurbished courthouses and in a number of other courthouses.

A dedicated victim suite of four rooms and a reception area is available within the Criminal Courts of Justice in Dublin. There are also dedicated waiting areas in the courthouses in:

- Cork (Washington Street and Anglesea Street)
- Letterkenny
- Limerick (Mulgrave Street)
- Mullingar
- Waterford
- Wexford.

Arrangements are in place to reserve consultation rooms for victims in other venues, if needed.

Rooms will be specially set aside for victims and vulnerable witnesses in all future building refurbishment projects.

Video-link facilities

Video-link facilities are available in 123 courtrooms in 29 court buildings around the country. Video link allows you to give evidence in a different room to where the court is being held. You appear on a TV-type screen when using a video-link.

We can arrange a video link for taking evidence. We do this in liaison with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and the prosecuting member of An Garda Síochána.

We will consult you about the nearest available facility for the taking of this evidence.

This will be either within the court building where the trial is happening, or the nearest available location. This facility is available in the following courthouses.

Location of witness video-link rooms (A-Z)

Locations (C-L)	Locations (M-W)
Clare: Ennis	Mayo: Castlebar
Cork: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglesea Street • Mallow Washington Street	Meath: Trim
Donegal: Letterkenny	Monaghan
Dublin: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCJ – Criminal Courts of Justice • Cloverhill • Dolphin House • Four Courts 	Offaly: Tullamore
Galway	Roscommon
Kerry: Tralee	Sligo
Kildare: Naas	Tipperary: Nenagh and Clonmel
Kilkenny	Waterford
Leitrim: Carrick on Shannon	Westmeath: Mullingar
Limerick: Mulgrave Street	Wexford
Longford	
Louth: Dundalk	

Option of screens

Screens are available in the Criminal Courts of Justice in:

- Castlebar in Mayo
- Cork (Anglesea Street)
- Dublin
- Ennis in Clare
- Galway
- Limerick (Mulgrave Street).

These are physical screens, and they enable you to give evidence in court without seeing the accused person. We can arrange to provide screens in other courthouses if requested.

If you wish to give evidence behind a screen, the prosecuting member of An Garda Síochána will talk you through the procedure. The Garda will cooperate with the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) to arrange this. We can transfer a case to a court venue where a screen is available if necessary.

Reserved seating

Reserved seating is available for the family of the deceased in murder and manslaughter cases at Central and Circuit Criminal Court hearings. This facility needs to be arranged in advance.

Visit the courthouse

You can visit the courthouse before the trial. You need to arrange this in advance with the prosecuting member of An Garda Síochána or the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Separate family law sittings in major court venues

Separate family law sittings take place at all major court venues. Urgent cases, like an application for a protection order, can still be heard at other times as well.

Our Victim Liaison Officers can arrange with the prosecuting member of An Garda Síochána or the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for you to access the victim rooms, if they are available.

Our Victim Liaison Officers can reserve family seating for appropriate or sensitive cases. They can also organise advance visits to courthouses.

They can give you contact details of voluntary organisations that offer support to crime victims. In some court venues, voluntary organisations provide victim accompaniment or victim support services in the courthouse.

Services

The Courts Service gives support and information through the following services.

Our website

Our website is:

www.Courts.ie

This website gives you a wide range of information on going to court. It is available in English and Irish, with some publications on the site available in:

- French
- Spanish
- Chinese
- Polish
- Russian
- Romanian.

The website includes a section for people who are going to court for the first time. This includes those attending court as a victim or a witness. It also gives information on preparing a victim impact statement.

Guide to ‘Going to court’

A publication entitled ‘Going to court’ is available as a booklet, on DVD or on our website. It gives a range of information on how the court process works, including:

- what happens in court
- who’s who in court
- what happens after a trial.

An interpretation service in the court room

This service is available, by order of the court, to victims and witnesses who do not speak English. It enables them to give their evidence, or make a victim impact statement if the law or the court allows this.

The Courts Service aims to provide a courteous, fair and sensitive service to victims

of crime.

If we do not meet your expectations

You may as a victim of crime be unhappy with the service available in a courthouse. If so, you should first raise this with the Victim Liaison Officer for that courthouse or the office manager for that courthouse, or both.

If, after raising your concerns, you are not satisfied with the help provided in a Courthouse, you should complain in writing to the Courts Service.

To do this, please use the formal customer complaints procedure and the Customer Service Complaint Form. They are available on the Courts Service website:

www.Courts.ie

You can forward the completed Customer Complaints Form to us by post or email. The addresses are given on the next page.

How to contact the Court Services

Region:	Customer Complaints Officers	Email	Phone
Dublin courts	Jenna Bailey	jennabailey@courts.ie	01 888 6152
Southern Cork Kerry Limerick Tipperary	Ciara Smalle	southerncustomercomplaints@courts.ie	021 238 9971
Western Clare Donegal Galway Leitrim Mayo Roscommon Sligo	Pat Conlon	westerncustomercomplaints@courts.ie	094 904 3863
North Midlands Cavan	Alan Cooke	northmidlandscustomercomplaints@courts.ie	042 939 2345

Region:	Customer Complaints Officers	Email	Phone
Longford Louth Meath Monaghan Westmeath			
Eastern Carlow Kildare Kilkenny Laois Offaly Waterford Wexford Wicklow	Grace Murphy	easterncustomercomplaints@courts.ie	045 980 103
Criminal courts of Justice	Eamonn Doherty	eamonnmoherty@courts.ie	01 798 8268

We will deal with all complaints promptly, fairly and courteously.

The Office of the Ombudsman may review the Courts Service performance of its administrative functions.

Your guide to the Criminal Courts

The tables below show you the six types of courts, the cases they hear, who hears them and where.

District Court

Criminal case heard	Minor offences.
Heard by	One judge, no jury.
Location	130 courthouses nationwide.

Circuit Court

Criminal case heard	More serious offences, but not offences like murder, rape, serious sexual assault. Also deals with appeals from the District Court.
Heard by	One judge with jury.
Location	8 circuits with at least one Circuit Court sitting in each county.

High Court

Criminal case heard	Known as the Central Criminal Court when trying criminal cases outside the jurisdiction of the Circuit Court. For example, murder, rape and serious sexual assault cases.
Heard by	One judge with jury.
Location	Criminal Courts of Justice in Dublin and locations outside Dublin from time to time.

Special Criminal Court (set up in 1972)

Criminal case heard	Specified offences, mainly related to terrorism and serious 'organised' crime.
Heard by	Three judges, no jury.
Location	Criminal Courts of Justice in Dublin.

Court of Criminal appeal

Criminal case heard	Appeals from the Circuit Court, Central Criminal Court and Special Criminal Courts. Decisions are final, unless they involve a point of law of exceptional public interest.
Heard by	Three judges, no jury.
Location	Criminal Courts of Justice in Dublin.

Supreme Court

Criminal case heard	Appeals from the Court of Criminal Appeal if the Supreme Court is satisfied: the decision involves a matter of general public importance, or in the interests of justice, there needs to be an appeal to the Supreme Court. (Article 34.5.3 of the Constitution)
Heard by	Three or, in some cases, five Supreme Court judges.
Location	Four Courts complex in Dublin.

Section 6: Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

Role of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)

When you report a serious crime, the Gardaí will investigate it and send a file to the Office of the DPP. We will read the file to see if there is enough evidence to prosecute someone for the crime. We will also assess if it is in the public interest to bring the case to court. If it is, we will decide what the charges should be.

Making our decision about prosecuting

The decision to prosecute is a serious one. It can have a lasting effect on both the victim of the crime and the accused person. Only the DPP or one of our lawyers may decide whether or not to prosecute in serious cases. Serious cases are things like:

- murder
- sexual offences
- fatal road accidents.

The Gardaí may decide to prosecute in less serious crimes without going to the DPP. However, the prosecution is still taken in the name of the DPP, and the DPP has the right to tell the Gardaí how to deal with the case.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions acts independently when deciding whether or not to prosecute. This means that no-one, including the Government or the Gardaí, can tell us whether or not to prosecute a case.

The Gardaí will tell you if we have decided to prosecute or not.

What happens if we decide not to prosecute?

If we decide not to prosecute, we can give you a summary of the reasons for our decision. You must send a request for reasons within 28 days of the date you are told we have decided not to prosecute.

If the decision in your case was made on or after 16 November 2015, you can ask us

for a summary of reasons if you are a:

- victim of a crime or
- family member of a victim in a fatal case or
- parent or guardian of a victim under the age of 18.

There may be times when we cannot give a summary of reasons because of a legal issue. If this happens, we will explain this to you.

Can prosecuting decisions be reviewed?

Yes. If you are a victim, or a family member of a deceased victim, and you are not satisfied with the summary of reasons for our decision not to prosecute, you can ask us to review our decision. The review will usually be carried out by a lawyer who was not involved in making the original decision.

When to ask for a review

If you have asked us for a reason for our decision, then your request for a review must be made **within 28 days of the date on the letter** telling you of the reason for not prosecuting your case.

Missed this deadline to ask? You can still ask

If you have not asked us for a reason for our decision, you can still ask for a review. If you do this, your request for a review must be made within 56 days (8 weeks) of the date you are told of the decision not to prosecute.

In some cases, the DPP may extend these time limits. They will do this only if there is a good reason and if it is in the interests of justice.

How do I request reasons or reviews?

You must make any request for reasons or reviews in writing and within the time limits set down. You can find out more by reading our information leaflet on our website:

['How to Request Reasons and Reviews'](#)

Contact details for the Director of Public Prosecutions

Website:	www.dppireland.ie .
Send requests to:	Victims Liaison Unit, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Infirmary Road, Dublin 7, D07 FHN8.

What happens if we decide to prosecute?

If we decide to prosecute, the Gardaí will tell you about this decision. They will also tell you when and where the court case will take place.

Where are prosecution cases heard?

The most serious cases are heard in the:

- Central Criminal Court
- Circuit Criminal Court or
- Special Criminal Court.

In these cases, a lawyer acting for the DPP will prosecute the case in court.

Less serious cases are heard in the District Court. In these cases, either the Gardaí or a lawyer acting for the DPP will prosecute the case.

You can read more about the different courts in: Section 5, The Courts Service.

What you can expect from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)

Victims

If you are a victim, you can ask us to:

- take your views into account when we are deciding whether or not to prosecute
- give you a summary of reasons if we decide not to prosecute (in cases where the decision is made on or after 16 November 2015)
- review decisions not to prosecute.

Fatal cases

If a member of your family or household is the victim in a fatal case, you can ask us to:

- tell you why, if possible, we decided not to prosecute
- review decisions not to prosecute.

Witnesses

If you are a witness, you can expect us to:

- treat you with respect and in a professional, non-discriminatory and impartial way
- take account of your personal situation, rights and dignity
- work with the Gardaí to make sure that you are kept up to date on your case
- in certain circumstances when giving your evidence, apply to the court to ask if you can use video link or other special facilities
- arrange for you to talk to the prosecution solicitor and barrister before the court case begins, if you wish.

The solicitor and barrister will explain what will happen in court, but they cannot talk to you about the evidence you will give.

When accused has been sentenced

If the accused has been sentenced, we can:

- ask the Court of Criminal Appeal to review the sentence if we think the sentence is unduly lenient – in other words, that it is so light that it is wrong in law
- ask for a review of sentences from the:
 - Central Criminal Court
 - Circuit Criminal Court
 - Special Criminal Court.

We cannot appeal a sentence from the District Court.

When accused is found not guilty

If the accused has been acquitted (found not guilty), we can:

- appeal the decision of the judge, but only in very limited circumstances
- take your views into account when considering an appeal.

We cannot appeal an acquittal from the District Court.

You can read more about the various types of appeals and what to expect at those appeal hearings on our website:

[www.dppireland.ie/victims- witnesses/appeals-information/](http://www.dppireland.ie/victims-witnesses/appeals-information/)

If we do not meet your expectations

If we do not meet your expectations and you would like to ask questions, make suggestions or make a complaint about our service, you can contact us at the details below.

How to contact the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

Address:	The Director of Public Prosecutions, Infirmary Road, Dublin 7, D07 FHN8.
Phone:	01 858 8500
Fax:	01 642 7406

Visit the Publications section of our website:

www.dppireland.ie/publications/information-for-the-public/

On the website you will find the following plain English information booklets:

- The Role of the DPP
- Going to Court as a Witness
- How we make prosecution decisions
- How to request reasons and reviews
- Making a Victim Impact Statement
- Releasing my counselling records
- What is an Undue Leniency Appeal?
- What is a Sentence Appeal?
- What is a Conviction Appeal?

Section 7: Irish Prison Service (IPS)

Role of the Prison Service

The Irish Prison Service manages prisons in Ireland. Our role covers the following six categories:

1. [Prisons](#)
2. [Rehabilitation](#)
3. [Sentence remission](#)
4. [Release from prison](#)
5. [Sex offenders](#)
6. [Temporary release](#)

These six categories are explained briefly below.

1. Prisons

We provide safe, secure custody for people sent to prison by the courts. Prisons range from high-security institutions to open prisons with lower levels of security. Each prisoner is placed in the type of prison that is consistent with:

- their offence
- the length of sentence they must serve
- their level of risk.

You can get more information about prisons and places of detention in Ireland towards the end of this section in: 'Your guide to prisons and places of detention'.

2. Rehabilitation

We aim to rehabilitate offenders to prevent them from reoffending when they are released from prison. Rehabilitation services treat and address issues that can lead to offending behaviour like:

- drug and alcohol addiction

- lack of education and training
- anger management
- self-management.

This encourages the personal development of prisoners and prepares them for their release when they will have to resettle into the community.

3. Sentence remission

Sometimes remission applies to a sentence. Remission means a prisoner does not have to serve the full sentence given by the judge. Prisoners with a sentence where remission applies are legally entitled to a one quarter remission of their sentence. Remission is based on their good behaviour. Judges take this into account when passing sentence.

In addition, all prisoners with remission attached to their sentence, may apply to receive an enhanced remission period of more than one quarter but not more than one third of their sentence. However, there is no automatic entitlement to enhanced remission.

Prisoners who cannot benefit from remission include those serving life sentences.

Prisoners serving life sentences have no set release date and are only freed with the approval of the Parole Board.

4. Release from prison

Offenders are usually released from prison when they:

- complete their sentence
- are released on parole or
- when they are approved for temporary release.

A life-sentenced prisoner released from prison is subject to certain conditions for life. This includes supervision by the Probation Service and other conditions designed to protect the public. If they do not follow these conditions, the prisoner may have to return to prison.

Prisoners may be released as a result of an appeal or some other legal process. In certain cases, a person in custody who is awaiting trial and has not been convicted may be released on bail. They must first apply to the courts to be released on bail.

5. Sex offenders

All sex offenders released from prison after September 2001 are subject to certain restrictions. One of these is they must notify An Garda Síochána of their current address and of any future change in address.

6. Temporary release

Temporary release allows an offender to reintegrate into the community in a planned way. Temporary release arrangements include:

- release under the direct supervision of the Probation Service
- release under the Community Return Scheme or Community Support Scheme
- release to employment or training programmes
- compassionate release because of ill-health or family circumstances
- release to help the offender reintegrate when they are nearing the end of their sentence.

We take many factors into account when considering prisoners for temporary release, including any possible danger to the public and to their victim. When we release an offender on temporary release, we try to make sure that they do not come into contact with the victim of their crime.

What to expect from the Irish Prison Service

Our mission

To make communities safer by providing prisoners with:

- safe and secure custody
- dignity of care
- rehabilitation.

Our vision

To make communities safer through excellence in a prison service built on respect for human dignity.

The Victim Liaison Service

This is a voluntary and strictly confidential service.

You can only receive information about an offender currently serving a sentence for an offence they committed against you.

You can opt into the service by contacting us. We will register your name and contact details, and you will be a 'registered victim' with the Irish Prison Service Victim Liaison Service. The service covers only the period while the offender is in custody and will finish when the offender is released.

What we do for victims of crime

We will:

- try to rehabilitate offenders sentenced to prison, so that other people will not become victims of their crimes
- consider possible risks to you in all cases of temporary release
- make sure we do everything we can to prevent an offender in prison from causing further upset to victims.

If registered victims (victims registered with our Victim Liaison Service) ask us, we will give them the following information.

Release date

If you or a member of your family have asked us to do so, we will tell you when the offender is to be released from prison. This may be either on temporary release or at the end of their sentence.

If the release is ordered by the court, we would usually do this after the release has happened.

Release conditions

We will let you know any conditions attached to the release or discharge.

Changes to sentence conditions

If you ask us to do so, we will tell you about any other relevant developments about the prisoner's sentence. These include things like:

- transfers between prisons
- Parole Board hearings (for prisoners sentenced to eight years or more).

Prisoner escapes

We will tell you if the prisoner has escaped from custody.

Prisoner dies

We will tell you if the prisoner dies while in custody or on temporary release.

Sex offenders

We will tell An Garda Síochána about the release of all sex offenders.

How to register with our Victim Liaison Service

You or a family member or a third party acting on your behalf may like to register with our Victim Liaison Service. If so, please contact the Prison Service Victim Liaison Officer – contact details below. We will keep you informed of significant developments in a particular prisoner's case,

As a registered victim, contact the Irish Prison Service, if you have any questions.

How to contact the Victim Liaison Officer

Address:	Irish Prison Service Headquarters, IDA Business Park, Ballinalee Road, Co Longford, N39 A308.
Phone:	043 333 5100
Email:	vlo@irishprisons.ie
Website:	www.irishprisons.ie

If we do not meet your expectations

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of our service, you can do so by putting your complaint in writing and sending it to the following address.

Where to send complaints

Address:	Assistant Principal Officer, Victim Liaison Service, Irish Prison Service Headquarters, IDA Business Park, Ballinalee Road, Co Longford, N39 A308.
Phone:	043 333 5100
Email:	info@irishprisons.ie

Your guide to prisons and places of detention

We do our best to place prisoners in an institution as near as possible to their homes, so that relatives and friends can visit. This is not always possible, for

example, in the case of prisoners who may be a threat to the public and must be kept in a high-security prison.

A committal prison is a prison to which a court can send a person directly. The Prison Service can transfer prisoners from a committal prison to other prisons or institutions.

Your guide to prisons and places of detention

More information on the Irish Prison Service is available at www.irishprisons.ie and the following table provides a list of our prisons:

Prison	Type of prison	Location and phone
Arbour Hill Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males. The prisoner profile is largely made up of long-term sentenced prisoners and sex offenders.	Arbour Hill, Dublin 7, D07 YV40. 01 472 4000
Castlerea Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for remand and sentenced prisoners in Connacht. It also takes committals from counties Cavan, Donegal and Longford.	Harristown, Castlerea, Co Roscommon, F45 X330. 094 962 5213
Cloverhill Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males. It mainly caters for remand prisoners committed from the Leinster area.	Cloverhill Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, D22 WC84. 01 630 4580
Cork Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for counties Cork, Kerry and Waterford.	Rathmore Road, Cork City, T23 Y642. 021 238 8000
Dóchas Centre	A closed, medium-security prison for adult females. It is the prison for females committed on remand or sentenced from all courts outside the Munster area.	North Circular Road, Dublin 7, D07 YC97. 01 885 8987

Prison	Type of prison	Location and phone
Limerick Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males and females. It is the committal prison for males for counties Clare, Limerick and Tipperary; and for females for all six Munster counties.	Mulgrave Street, Limerick, V94 P8N1. 061 204 700
Loughan House	An open, low-security prison for adult males who are regarded as needing lower levels of security.	Open Centre, Blacklion, Co Cavan, F91 NY76. 071 983 6021
Midlands Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for counties Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Offaly and Westmeath. It is also the main prison for sex offenders.	Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co Laois, R32 F796. 057 867 2110 or 057 867 2100
Mountjoy Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males. It is the main committal prison for Dublin city and county.	North Circular Road, Dublin 7, D07 YC97. 01 806 2800
Portlaoise Prison	A closed high-security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for those sent to custody from the Special Criminal Court. Prisoners accommodated here include those linked with subversive crime such as buying property for laundering money that was made illegally.	Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co Laois, R32 KN97. 057 868 1300

Prison	Type of prison	Location and phone
Shelton Abbey	An open, low-security prison for adult males who are regarded as needing lower levels of security.	Arklow, Co Wicklow, Y14 T638. 0402 42300
Wheatfield Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males.	Cloverhill Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, D22 Y2V5. 01 778 9400

Section 8: Parole Board

The Parole Board is an independent body that was established in July 2021 under the Parole Act 2019. It replaces the former non-statutory Interim Parole Board.

The Parole Board is statutorily independent in its decision making. This means it operates separately from other branches of government. It currently considers applications for parole from prisoners serving life sentences. It decides whether or not they should be released on parole.

By law, a person must have served at least 12 years of their life sentence before they can be granted parole.

Our mission

We are an independent Parole Board and we aim to:

- protect the community
- be fair to parole applicants
- listen to victims.

About parole

Parole involves release from prison under certain conditions.

If granted parole, the person must follow all the conditions of their parole order. They are still serving a life sentence, but in the community. The person may be returned to prison if they reoffend or break any of the conditions of the parole order.

When deciding on an application, the Parole Board considers many things including:

- the risk to the public
- the rehabilitation of the applicant
- whether it is appropriate to release them on parole.

By law, a person must have served at least 12 years of their life sentence before the Board can grant or refuse a parole application.

When a person makes an application for parole, the Board may write to the relevant

services and request reports relating to the applicant. These services include the:

- Irish Prison Service
- Irish Prison Service Psychology Service
- Probation Service
- Garda Síochána
- a psychiatrist
- a psychologist
- any other source which the Board deems appropriate in the case.

What victims can expect from the Parole Board

Registering

You can register with the Parole Board by completing the registration form at the Parole Board website:

www.gov.ie/paroleboard

We will contact you

If you have registered, and a prisoner applies to have their sentence reviewed, we will contact you. You may decide you do not want to make a submission to the Parole Board. The Board understands that this does not mean you were unaffected by the crime.

We will help you with your submission

The Parole Board will guide you through the process of making a submission if you choose to do so.

You can make your submission in person or in writing. The Parole Board is committed to doing its best to help victims to make their submissions at a time, place and in a format that suits the victim concerned.

Parole Board legal Aid Scheme

The Parole Board has a legal Aid Scheme. This gives victims free legal aid to help them make their submission. The Parole Board's office can arrange legal aid for you or you can choose your own legal representative. However, the Board will only pay the legal representative the rates specified under its Legal Aid Scheme.

It's important for you to know that that your submission will be given to the prisoner applying for parole. This is part of the parole review process.

We can let you know the parole outcome

If you wish, we will let you know the outcome once the Board has made its decision on the parole application.

If we do not meet your expectations

You can contact us at the details below if:

- we do not meet your expectations
- you would like to ask questions
- you would like make suggestions
- you want to complain about our service,

How to contact the Parole Board

Address:	Suite 401, The Capel Building, Mary's Abbey, Dublin 7, D07 N4C6.
Phone:	01 474 8770 01 474 8767
Email:	info@paroleboard.gov.ie vlo@paroleboard.gov.ie
Website:	www.gov.ie/paroleboard

Section 9: Oberstown Children Detention Campus

Role of Oberstown Children Detention Campus

Our mission

Our mission is to support young people detained in Oberstown Children Detention Campus so they can:

- move away from offending behaviour
- make a more positive contribution to society.

Our vision

We aim to provide safe, secure and appropriate care for young people. We want to:

- meet their health and education needs
- support them to address their offending behaviour
- prepare them to return to their families and communities following release from detention.

What you can expect from Oberstown Children Detention Campus

Victims of crime can voluntarily register with Oberstown. This can be done on our website:

www.oberstown.com

A registered victim is entitled to ask for information about any period of planned absence of an offender. Planned absences include:

- release
- transfer
- early discharge
- periods of temporary leave during the Detention Order.

Information about these absences is explained below. As a victim, if you wish, you may name a representative to be told about any release on your behalf. Oberstown Children Detention Campus' Victim Liaison Service is strictly confidential.

The Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017 began in November 2017.

Oberstown Children Detention Campus is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities as outlined in Part 2 of the Act.

Planned absences

The Children Act, 2001, as amended, supports the reintegration of young people in detention into their communities and society.

The following sections of the Act allow young people to have planned absences from the detention campus. This supports their reintegration and meets the specific needs of young people.

Section 155: Transfer to prison

A young person convicted of an offence and sentenced to detention in Oberstown Children Detention Campus can be authorised to be transferred to the Irish Prison Service. This may be done by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth after the young person has first served a period of their detention in the Oberstown school.

Section 200: Medical treatment

This section allows young people to be taken off site to receive medical attention or treatment that they cannot receive in the detention school. The child is considered to be in lawful custody while off site for this purpose.

Section 202: Permitted absence

A Section 202 permitted absence is a once-off, off campus movement in exceptional circumstances. For example, for an offender to attend the funeral of a near relative, or to visit a seriously ill relative. The offender may or may not be accompanied by staff.

Section 203: Other permitted absences

Section 203 absences are where permission is given for either one-off or repeated movement off campus unaccompanied by staff. This permission is given so the young person can attend:

- a training centre
- work experience
- recreational or sporting activity.

Section 204: Mobility trips

Section 204 absences are authorised absences from a children's detention school to help a young person reintegrate into society. During such authorised absences the young person stays under the supervision of Oberstown staff.

Section 205: Temporary leave

Temporary leave may be granted to a young person at the discretion of the Director of Oberstown. It does not apply during the first month of a detention order, and may be suspended if considered not to be in the best interests of the young person or society in general. The next paragraph explains the conditions of this leave.

Section 206: Conditions of a grant of temporary leave

The young person on temporary leave must be supervised by an identified parent or guardian, or another responsible person while on leave. The young person may be absent from the detention school for one or more nights. The parent, guardian or other responsible person must undertake to supervise the young person and abide by the conditions of:

- residency
- curfew
- any other specific conditions that are stated.

Section 207: Supervision in the community

Following consultation and agreement, we may place a young person in the community under the supervision of the Probation Service. A young person must be fully supervised by parents or guardians, and they must attend school or a training programme.

The placing may be cancelled if:

- there are concerns about the child's welfare and protection
- if the conditions of supervision are not being met.

Section 210: Early discharge

A young person may be released from detention 24 hours before their release date, or on the nearest working day if their release date falls on a Saturday, Sunday or bank holiday.

Section 211: Order for production of young person

This order may be given to the young person when their presence is needed in the interests of justice. For example, to attend court, or for the purpose of any inquest or inquiry.

Section 215: Escape

This section deals with when a young person escapes while being conveyed to or from the centre; or is otherwise absent without permission.

Appeal

Sometimes, a young person may be released with very little or no notice. This may happen if a District Court approves their leave to appeal or on instruction from the High Court or Court of Appeal.

Oberstown will try to let a victim or their representative know if the person has been released as soon as possible.

Death

If the young person dies while in detention or while on temporary release.

If we do not meet your expectations

If we do not meet your expectations as a registered victim, or if you have any questions about the Victim Liaison Service at Oberstown Children Detention campus, you can contact the Victim Liaison Officer at the contact details below.

Contact details for the Oberstown Victim Liaison Service

Address:	Victim Liaison Service, Oberstown Children Detention Campus, Lusk, Co Dublin, K45 AY66
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Contact details for Oberstown Children Detention Campus

Address:	Oberstown Children Detention Campus, Oberstown, Lusk, Co Dublin, K45 AY66.
Phone:	01 852 6400
Email:	vl@oberstown.com
Website:	www.oberstown.com

As a victim, if you have a complaint about the work of the Victim Liaison Service, you can write or send an email to the following address. You can also phone.

Where to make a complaint to Oberstown

Address:	Director, Oberstown Children Detention Campus Lusk, Co Dublin, K45 AY66.
Phone:	01 852 6400
Email:	info@oberstown.com

Section 10: Central Mental Hospital

Role of the Central Mental Hospital

The National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS), Portrane, is a national service. It is part of the Health Service Executive's (HSE's) Mental Health Service.

The Central Mental Hospital provides mental health services for patients who have been committed to a designated centre under the Criminal Law (Insanity) Act 2006. This happens when the courts have decided that they are unfit to stand trial or are not guilty of an offence by reason of insanity. The term 'not guilty by reason of insanity' and other terms are explained at the end of this section.

The Central Mental Hospital also provides mental health assessment and treatment to prisoners who require inpatient mental health treatment at a secure inpatient mental health facility.

The Central Mental Hospital aims to deliver individualised care programmes to each patient, based on their assessed needs. This means that every patient has access to a range of mental health professionals including:

- nurses
- psychiatrists
- psychologists
- social workers
- occupational therapists.

These professionals work with the patient to maximise their recovery.

Mental health definitions

Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGRI) – special verdict

(Section 5 Criminal Law [Insanity] Act 2006.)

This is where an accused person is tried for an offence and, following evidence presented by psychiatrists, the jury finds that the person who committed the offence was suffering from a mental illness at the time. As a result of their mental illness, they:

- did not know the nature and quality of the offence
- did not know what they were doing was wrong or
- were unable to stop committing the offence.

A person found NGRI may be detained in a designated centre until the Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board decides that they should be released.

Fitness to be Tried

(Section 4, Criminal Law [Insanity] Act 2006.)

If an accused person is suffering from a mental illness and, because of that mental illness, is unable to properly engage with the legal process, they may be found Unfit to be Tried. They could then be detained in a designated centre for treatment and returned to the court if their condition improves.

Leave

(Section 14, Criminal Law [Insanity] Act 2006.)

In the National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS), we operate a programme of temporary releases or 'leaves' from the designated centre for patients. All patients in the Central Mental Hospital (CMH) can be considered for temporary release, also known as 'leave'.

The process of applying for leave is overseen by the Clinical Director of the CMH. The Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) make an application for leave to the Leave Panel. This panel is overseen by the Clinical Director.

If approved the Clinical Director makes a recommendation to the Department of Justice and Equality. The Department of Justice makes the final decision as to whether or not leave is granted.

The different kinds of leaves are explained below:

Level 1 Leave

This is leave outside the hospital. The patient is accompanied by National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS) staff. This type of leave is granted for a once off event on a case-by-case basis. This would be used in the early stages of rehabilitation or in exceptional circumstances, for example, to attend a medical appointment.

Level 2 Leave

This is when someone is accompanied by NFMHS staff for part of a day. It is part of a programme of progressive rehabilitation that is planned and overseen by the patient's treating team. Normally this leave is for a few hours at a time on an ongoing basis.

Level 3 Leave

This is unaccompanied day leave as part of a programme of progressive rehabilitation. This should not normally be granted unless the patient has had successful accompanied day leave (Level 2) over a period of time.

Level 4 Leave

This is overnight leave on a case-by-case basis. This should not be granted unless the patient has had successful unaccompanied day leave (Level 3) over a period of time.

Level 5 Leave

This is overnight leave as part of a programme of progressive rehabilitation. It is only granted to people who have had a successful overnight leave (Level 4). We decide this on a case-by-case basis.

The patient must comply with certain conditions when taking leave. Leave can be

withdrawn if the patient does not comply with the conditions, or if there is a concern about risk.

Supported housing

Patients sometimes move on to living in supported housing after Level 4 or Level 5 leave. These patients are supported and supervised by community-based Forensic Rehabilitation and Recovery (FR&R), consultant-led, multi-disciplinary teams. These teams are part of the National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS).

Conditional discharge

(Section 13 of the Criminal Law [Insanity] Act 2006)

A patient can be discharged from the Central Mental Hospital by the Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board. When discharged, the patient must stick to a set of conditions related to:

- place of residence
- use of drugs or alcohol
- maintenance of mental health
- social circumstances
- contact with the treating mental health team
- avoiding harmful behaviour.

There may also be specific conditions related to victim issues.

These conditions are supervised by the Forensic Recovery and Rehabilitation Team.

The Clinical Director of the Central Mental Hospital can recall a patient to the Central Mental Hospital if they do not comply with the conditions of their discharge.

Unconditional discharge

(Section 13 of the Criminal Law [Insanity] Act 2006)

A patient can be given an unconditional discharge from the Central Mental Hospital by the Mental Health (Criminal) Law Review Board. When this happens, the patient

need no longer adhere to any particular conditions.

What you can expect from the Central Mental Hospital

If you are a victim and wish to register with us, please email us at:

vlo.nfmhs@hse.ie

Give your:

- name
- contact details
- details of the patient whose information you wish to get.

How we will treat you

We will:

- be professional and courteous
- respond in a timely and respectful manner to your application
- be open and honest at all times
- protect your privacy
- keep accurate records of your dealings with us
- keep records safe.

What we can do for registered victims

Patient release

If you are a registered victim, we can let you know when the patient is to be released from hospital, on:

- temporary leave
- conditional discharge
- unconditional discharge.

Leave cancelled

We can also let you know if a patient's temporary leave or conditional discharge is revoked.

Patient discharged

We will let you know of any conditions for leave or conditional discharge which relate specifically to you, the victim.

Patient transfers

If you have asked us to do this, we will let you know about other relevant developments like the patient being transferred to:

- another hospital
- court
- prison
- any other place.

Patient escapes

We will let you know if the patient escapes.

Patient dies

We will let you know if the patient dies while detained in hospital or while on leave or conditional discharge.

Limit to information we can give you

It is important to note that we cannot give you specific clinical or personal information about the patient.

Further contact details are available on our website:

www.hse.ie/eng/national-forensic-mental-health-service-portrane/

If we do not meet your expectations

If you have a complaint or feedback about any aspect of our service, you can email

us or use our website to lodge your complaint.

Contact details for feedback or complaints about the Central Mental Hospital

Email:	complaints@nfmhs.ie
Website:	www.hse.ie/eng/national- forensic-mental-health-service-portrane/

Section 11: The Probation Service

Role of the Probation Service

The Probation Service is an agency within the Department of Justice. It works with offenders and their families to reduce crime levels to have:

- safer communities
- fewer victims.

The Probation Service is conscious of the harm caused by crime to individuals, families and communities.

Our Probation Officers work with offenders and their families:

- across the country
- in prisons
- detention centres.

Their goal is to support them so they can lead more productive lives, free from crime and the harm it causes.

In carrying out this work we:

- prepare pre-sentence reports at the request of the courts
- provide court-ordered, structured supervision in the community
- put in place programmes which aim to reduce offending
- work with other community-based organisations who seek to reduce offending
- respond to requests from victims and victim support organisations.

We work with offenders in prison, including those serving life sentences, to:

- address their offending behaviour
- support safe reintegration into the community.

The Probation Service manages a number of Court Orders. These orders are listed and explained below.

Probation Order

A Probation Order is when the court places an offender under the supervision of a probation officer for a definite length of time.

The Order may contain conditions to prevent the person from repeating the same offence or committing other offences. These conditions may include things like attending a particular centre for treatment of an addiction or undertaking an educational or vocational training course.

An offender may be returned to court if they don't meet the conditions, and a new sentence may be given for the original offence.

Community service

The court may order a person over 16 years of age to do unpaid work for between 40 and 240 hours. The work must be to the benefit of the community and be completed within one year. The Probation Service arranges and manages community service placements. If the person does not complete the community service, we will arrange for the person to return to court.

Supervision if penalty is postponed

A court may decide to defer (put off to a later date) sentencing for a period of time, usually not more than one year. This is to allow the offender to examine and think about issues related to their crime. During this time, the offender may have to remain under the supervision of the Probation Service.

Suspended sentence supervision

This is where the court suspends some or all of a prison sentence. The court may place the person under the supervision of the Probation Service to reduce the risk of reoffending. The court may set conditions to support the supervision.

Post-release supervision

As part of the sentence for a sex offender, the court may include a period of post-release supervision by the Probation Service. Again, the court may set conditions to support the supervision.

Community sanctions for young offenders

There are community sanctions for young offenders. These are managed by the Young Person's Probation teams who work with the offenders and their families.

There are family conferences and probation orders that have specific conditions relating to:

- education
- training
- use of leisure
- working with identified community mentors.

How we work with offenders

We take account of victim concerns when we prepare reports on offenders for the courts.

We strongly encourage offenders to take responsibility for the hurt, damage and suffering which they may have caused to the victim.

We explore ways how offenders can make good the harm they have caused.

We make sure that offenders continue to address any lifestyle issues or attitudes that have contributed to their offences against you.

We make sure that any community-based programmes are sensitive to your concerns and aim to prevent reoffending.

What you can expect from the Probation Service

Through the Restorative Justice and Victim Services Unit we will respond in a timely, respectful and responsible way to your queries.

We will explain the meaning of the different Orders (outlined above) which we operate on behalf of the court. Depending on the circumstances, we will do this:

- by phone
- in writing or

- we'll meet with you.

We will respond in a safe and professional manner if you ask us to be involved in a restorative justice process.

Restorative justice

Restorative Justice is when a voluntary meeting takes place between:

- a victim
- an offender
- an independent person skilled at managing such meetings.

Face to face meeting

At the meeting, the victim can tell their story. This means that the offender can hear the consequences of their crime and – as much as possible – repair the harm they have caused. This can help as it gives victims a voice. It also holds offenders to account for what they have done by getting them to take responsibility and make amends.

Separate meetings

If they prefer, victims and offenders can also communicate through the independent person rather than meeting each other face-to-face. If the victim and offender do choose to meet face-to-face, they will be asked if they would like to bring anyone to support them.

You can ask us to explore whether restorative justice is possible in your case. Alternatively, we may invite you to take part in restorative justice if asked to explore this by the courts. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to take part, we will explain each step of the process and support you in your decision making.

We will work with you to prepare a victim impact report if the court asks for one.

Restorative Justice and Victim Services Unit

The Probation Service has a national unit that provides a central point of contact to respond effectively to your requests and queries. It is called the Restorative Justice and Victim Services Unit.

Contact details for the Restorative Justice and Victim Services Unit

Phone:	01 817 3600.
Email:	vsu@probation.ie restorative@probation.ie

If we do not meet your expectations

If you would like to ask questions, make suggestions or make a complaint about our service please contact the Senior Probation Officer. Contact details below.

Contact details for feedback or complaints to the Probation Service

Address:	Senior Probation Officer, Restorative Justice and Victim Services Unit Probation Service, Haymarket, Smithfield, Dublin 7, DO7 WT27.
Phone:	01 817 3600
Email:	restorative@probation.ie
Website:	www.probation.ie

Section 12: Legal Aid Board

Legal aid

Legal aid can help you if you cannot afford to pay for a solicitor privately yourself.

Legal aid can provide for:

- legal advice through a solicitor
- representation by a solicitor or barrister in court.

The difference between criminal and civil legal aid

Criminal legal aid and civil legal aid are separate services.

Criminal legal aid

When a person has been charged with a criminal offence and is due to appear in court, they can apply to the judge for criminal legal aid. The court can then grant the aid. If you have a query about criminal legal aid in a particular case you should contact the Clerk or Registrar at the court which is dealing with the criminal case.

Civil legal aid

It is the Legal Aid Board which provides civil legal aid in cases dealt with in the Civil Courts. This mainly includes cases of family law and domestic violence. Civil matters usually involve disputes between you and another person, or between you and an organisation.

Role of the Legal Aid Board

The Legal Aid Board gives legal aid and advice in civil cases to people who cannot afford to pay a solicitor themselves. Most of our work is in the area of family law and domestic violence.

Special arrangements for some cases

There are special arrangements for:

- court cases to help victims in rape and other serious sexual assaults

- suspected victims of human trafficking.

We deliver our services through a network of full-time and part-time law centres located throughout the country. These centres are staffed by our solicitors. We also contract private solicitors to provide services for us.

We have a series of information leaflets about our services and the kinds of offences we cover. You can get these leaflets, as well as a list of law centres from our website or by writing to the address below.

Legal Aid Board head office contact details

Address:	Legal Aid Board Head Office, Quay Street, Cahirciveen, Co Kerry, V23 RD36.
Phone:	066 947 1000
Website:	www.legalaidboard.ie

What you can expect from the Legal Aid Board

If you qualify for our services, we will:

- give you a timely and quality service in line with our Customer Charter
- respect and maintain your confidentiality
- listen to you and treat you with dignity and respect.

Our services

Advice service

We have an advice service for victims of rape and other serious sexual assaults whose cases are going to court.

Representation

We can provide a legal aid representation service in certain rape and sexual

offences cases where your prior sexual experience has been raised by the defence during the trial. In these cases, the Legal Aid Board can appoint a solicitor and a barrister to represent you where the issue of your previous sexual history is being raised.

Sometimes in a rape or other serious sexual assault case, the accused may apply to have your previous counselling records considered as part of the case. We can provide you with legal representation during such cases.

These services are free of charge for all victims.

Advice about potential human trafficking victims

We provide free advice for all potential victims of human trafficking who have been identified to us by An Garda Síochána.

We will give you information on:

- your status in Ireland
- applying for asylum
- subsidiary protection (protection for people who don't qualify as refugees)
- leave to remain in Ireland.

We can also tell you about employment protection legislation. For example, this might be information on the legally:

- allowed maximum working hours
- required minimum break periods at work.

We can give you information on how to look for compensation from:

- perpetrators of trafficking
- the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal.

We can give you information on voluntarily returning home.

We can tell you what is involved if you are called as a witness in a criminal trial.

Help for victims of domestic violence

If you have been a victim of domestic violence, you can apply for legal aid at:

- any of our law centres
- our office at Dolphin House in Dublin
- through our website ([Domestic violence - LAB](#)).

You can also apply to the District Court for a number of orders (see below).

Legal Aid Board staff can help you with your application. They can also provide you with a solicitor to represent you at the court hearing. You will not have to pay anything if you are seeking legal aid for taking or defending an application in the District Court for a:

- barring order
- safety order
- interim barring order
- protection order.

You will not have to pay anything if you are seeking legal aid for defending an application by Tusla (the Child and Family Agency) to:

- take your children into foster care
- allow its staff to supervise your children in your own home.

Further information on the above orders is provided in:

- section 15 of the Charter covering Victims and the Law.

You can get more information on obtaining legal aid from the Legal Aid Board on the Board's website:

www.legalaidboard.ie

If we do not meet your expectations

You can contact us at the details below if:

- we do not meet your expectations
- you would like to ask questions
- you would like to make suggestions
- you want to make a complaint about our service,

Contact details for questions or complaints about the Legal Aid Board

Address:	Complaints Officer Legal Aid Board, 48-49 North Brunswick Street, Georges' Lane, Dublin 7, D07 PE0C.
Phone:	01 646 9600 Lo-call: 0818 615200
Website:	www.legalaidboard.ie

Section 13: The Coroner

The Coroner's Service

The Coroner's Service comprises a network of coroners located in districts throughout the country. A coroner is an independent 'quasi-judicial' officer. A quasi-judicial officer is a person who has some legal powers, but does not have the full powers of the courts.

The coroner is responsible, in the public interest, for investigating reportable deaths. These include deaths that are:

- unexpected
- unexplained
- violent
- unnatural deaths.

There is a coroner for each district across the country. Coroners' powers and duties are set out by law in the Coroners Acts 1962-2019. You can find more information, and the contact details of the coroner for your district, on the Coroners' Service website at:

www.coroners.ie

What the coroner does

In Ireland the coroner carries out an independent inquiry to:

- find the cause of death of the person
- ensure that a death certificate can be issued.

In a number of deaths, coroners may need to direct a post-mortem and, in certain cases, may also need to hold an inquest.

The coroner's inquest is an important public service, particularly for:

- the family and friends of the person who has died
- other people connected to the circumstances of the death or recognised in law as affected by it.

An Inquest is independent of all other enquiries.

The Coroners' (Amendment) Act, 2019 sets out a more extensive range of deaths that require investigation and an inquest. This includes:

- deaths in State custody or detention
- maternal death
- late maternal death.

The Act also requires that the following deaths must be reported to the coroner:

- all stillbirths at 24 weeks' pregnant or more
- infant death (up to 365 days after birth).

The coroner may direct a post-mortem examination or inquest if they consider it appropriate. In the case of a stillbirth, the coroner will consult with a family member, if that is practicable, before directing an inquest.

An inquest is an inquiry held in public by a coroner, sometimes with a jury. The aim of the inquest is to find out:

- the identity of the deceased person
- the date and place of death
- how, when and where the death occurred
- the circumstances in which the death occurred (to the extent that the coroner considers it necessary).

The inquest finds answer to all of these questions, as far as possible, and returns a verdict.

Under the Coroners' Act 1962, neither the coroner nor a jury – if one is used to reach a verdict – can consider questions of civil or criminal liability. For example, they cannot consider:

- questions that may hold a person liable for the death of the deceased
- if a person bears a civil liability arising from the death.

Such matters of criminal or civil liability are for the courts to decide.

The inquest can make general recommendations:

- that the coroner or jury considers necessary or desirable in the interests of public health or safety
- designed to help prevent future deaths occurring.

The coroner is independent in carrying out their statutory functions. No-one can appeal the coroner's decision. However, a person who considers that a coroner has not acted in line with the law may appeal to the High Court for a review of the coroner's decision (this is known as a Judicial Review Application).

Coroners are conscious that while their inquiry into a death is required, the process can often cause upset and trauma for the family of the victim.

Coroners will carry out their work as sensitively as possible, and with respect for the deceased person and for grieving families, and other people affected by the death.

What you can expect from the coroner

Reportable deaths

Under law, certain categories of death must be reported to the coroner. Usually, a doctor, hospital, Gardaí or undertaker notified of the death will make that report. A list of reportable deaths is set out in the Second Schedule to the Coroners (Amendment) Act 2019. These include any unexpected, unexplained or violent death.

Family member

Under the Coroners Act, the term ‘family member’ in relation to the work of the coroner, includes the following people.

Those considered family members by the coroner

A: General relatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent• Grandparent• Child• Brother• Sister• Nephew• Niece• Uncle or aunt, whether of the whole blood, half blood or by affinity (for example, close family friend).
B: Spouse or partner
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A spouse.• A civil partner within the meaning of the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010.• Cohabiting partner of the person.
C: Member of the household
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any other person who is ordinarily a member of the person’s household.
D: Child in care
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any child who has been placed in foster care with the person or with any person referred to in the paragraphs (a) to (c) above. This also includes a reference to any member of the person’s family who is adopted.

The coroner's work involves:

- having the body identified by a family member (or a named person)
- directing a post-mortem examination where required
- authorising the release of the body for burial
- directing an inquest
- obtaining all necessary and relevant documentation.

Each of these are explained below.

Identifying the body

Identifying the body of the deceased person may be upsetting for family members or friends. In certain cases, if you find it too upsetting to do it yourself, arrangements can be made for someone else to do it for you.

Post-mortem examinations

The coroner may decide, after considering all the information available, that a post mortem examination is required. In certain circumstances, the coroner may be required by law to order such an examination.

A post-mortem examination is a special medical examination of the body carried out by a pathologist (a specialist medical doctor).

Where a coroner orders a post-mortem examination, this is done in the public interest. The consent of a family member is not required.

Coroners are aware of the concerns that the family of the deceased may have about this procedure and will inform and explain the reasons involved. A post mortem may help to give answers to family members about the cause of death of their loved one.

Under the Coroners (Amendment) Act, 2019, the coroner will provide a copy of the post-mortem report (on request) to a family member of the deceased person. There is an exception to this. If the coroner considers that providing the report could have an unfair influence on any criminal proceedings in relation to the death, they will not provide a copy of the post mortem to the family.

Release of body for burial

Coroners will do their best to release the body of the deceased for burial or cremation, without any unnecessary delay. They will tell you the likely date and time of the release of the body.

Inquests

Coroners will try to hold an inquest as soon as possible after the death. This process can take some time to make sure:

- all necessary medical and technical reports are available
- attendance of critical witnesses can be arranged.

An inquest is a public inquiry into the death, including an unexpected, unexplained or violent death.

The inquest may be opened and then adjourned if a death is being investigated by:

- An Garda Síochána
- the Garda Síochána Ombudsman
- the Defence Forces
- a body authorised in law to investigate certain types of accidents.

If this happens, the inquest will be opened and will hear basic information about identity. It will then be adjourned until the conclusion of the other investigations which might lead to criminal charges.

Under the Coroners (Amendment) Act 2019, the coroner must give at least 14 days' notice of the date, time and location of the inquest to a family member or other interested parties.

At the inquest, coroners can explain to you what is involved. During the inquest, coroners will try to be as sensitive as possible. For example, you may choose to leave the courtroom when the pathologist or any other person gives evidence which you might find distressing.

Obtaining relevant documents

Following the inquest, you can ask for copies of any documents that were made public at the inquest. You can get these from the coroner's office for a set fee.

Further information

In certain cases, coroners may be able to advise you of local support groups and networks that you can contact. These include social workers at various hospitals and bereavement counsellors. However, this is not a direct function of the coroner.

If you would like general information about our services, including information on fees, you can contact the relevant coroner's office. You can get the names, addresses and phone numbers of coroners from your local authority or from our website:

www.coroners.ie

You may have concerns or questions about the conduct of an inquiry into a death reported to a coroner, including a post-mortem examination or an inquest. If so, you should engage directly with the coroner concerned.

For general inquiries about the law in relation to coroners, you may contact the Coroner Service Implementation Team at the Department of Justice.

**Contact details: Department of Justice Coroner Service
Implementation Team**

Address:	Coroner Service Implementation Team, Department of Justice, Athlumney House, IDA Business Park, Johnstown, Navan, Co Meath, C15 ND62.
Phone:	046 909 1323
Fax:	046 905 0560
Email:	csitmail@justice.ie

Section 14: Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal

Role of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal (CITC) runs the general compensation scheme for personal injuries anyone suffers due to a violent crime. It also runs a separate compensation scheme for prison officers who suffer personal injuries due to a violent crime.

The Minister for Justice appoints the members of the Tribunal. The Tribunal is made up of 14 members (a chairperson and 13 other members).

The chairperson and each member are trained in law. The Tribunal members make the decisions independently. This means neither the Minister nor anyone else has a say in the matter.

You can apply for compensation payment connected to a violent crime for:

- personal injuries you suffered
- expenses you incurred
- losses that you suffered trying to prevent a crime
- losses that you suffered trying to save someone's life as a result of violent crime.

Compensation for dependants

The scheme also provides for the dependants of a victim who has died due to a violent crime to receive a payment.

However, the scheme does not compensate you for pain and suffering.

The compensation tribunal

- A member of the Tribunal normally decides on each compensation case.
- If you are unhappy with the decision, you can appeal it.

- In an appeal, three members of the Tribunal will reconsider your claim.

You will be invited to attend the appeal hearing, although you don't have to attend.

- The hearing will not involve the member who made the original decision on your case.
- We will hold the appeal hearing in private and in an informal manner – you will not need legal representation.
- The hearing will generally be held remotely, for example, by video conference, or in certain circumstances it will be held in person.

While the hearing is in private, please note that the decision of the Tribunal, duly redacted (sensitive information blacked out) to remove personal data, may be made publicly available.

Usually when awards are made, compensation is paid in a single payment. However, in certain cases, the Tribunal may make an initial payment and delay the final award. They may wish to wait until it becomes clearer what the long-term effect of an injury is likely to be.

The EU Directive on Compensation to Crime Victims provides for co-operation between EU member states. This means victims can get compensation for crimes committed in another Member State. You can get more information about that here:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32004L0080>

Where required, we can process claims from other Member States. We can also help people living in Ireland to send claims to other Member States.

Separate to the scheme, victims of a violent crime could be awarded compensation by court order. A court may order an offender to pay compensation to a victim as part of a criminal case.

A victim may also take a civil case (or action) for compensation against an offender. A civil action can include personal injury claims arising from the crime. They are usually taken by individuals against other individuals or organisations. It is up to the victim and their legal team to take this case.

Criminal prosecutions, on the other hand, are prosecuted by the State, usually

through the Director of Public Prosecutions.

When making an award, the Tribunal must make sure that a person is not being compensated for the same injury from a different source.

Where someone receives compensation for the same injury from another source, the Tribunal may decide:

- no award should be made or
- the award should be reduced by a certain amount.

The Tribunal may also decide that where it has already paid money to an applicant, the applicant should repay it.

Time limits for applying

Within three months

Applications must be made to the Tribunal as soon as possible, but within three months after the incident. The Tribunal can extend this time limit where the applicant can show that the reason for the delay in submitting the application justifies an exception. This can take place up to a maximum period of two years after the incident.

Reporting the incident to An Garda Síochána

The Tribunal requires report

To qualify for compensation, you must have reported the incident to An Garda Síochána (or to Fiosrú, the Police Ombudsman Commission where the crime is alleged to have been committed by a member of An Garda Síochána) without delay and you must co-operate with An Garda Síochána.

Applicants must indicate if the incident is the subject of criminal proceedings. In submitting an application, you need to include a copy of your statement to An Garda Síochána.

The Tribunal will seek a report about the incident from An Garda Síochána.

Limitations and restrictions

Applicants need to know that there are limitations and restrictions relating to the awarding of compensation. These are set out in paragraphs 6 and 7 and 9-15 (inclusive) of the Scheme. Before applying for compensation, applicants should review the terms and conditions of the scheme. These are available at:

<http://www.gov.ie/criminalinjuries>

Timelines for decision

It may take some time before an application for compensation is ready to be submitted to the Tribunal for consideration and decision.

For example, before the Tribunal decides on compensation it will typically need final Garda reports on the crime and the outcomes of any court cases initiated. The Tribunal can only consider an application for compensation after Fiosrú, the Police Ombudsman Commission [used to be called GSOC] has concluded its investigation.

In complex cases, the Tribunal may require additional information before it can make a complete assessment, for example:

- medical reports on injuries
- assessment of loss of earnings
- actuarial assessments (money you are claiming)
- other reports as required.

These and other factors will affect how long an application will take.

What to expect from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal

If you wish, we will work with a victim support organisation that is acting for you.

How we will work with you

Staff of the Tribunal will:

- give you information to help you complete the application form for compensation
- work with you in a polite and professional way
- send you the Tribunal's written decision on your case
- arrange for payment of compensation awarded to you as quickly as possible
- tell you of your right to appeal a decision of the Tribunal.

Working with other Member States

You may be looking for compensation from another Member State within the European Union (EU) for an injury that you suffered as a result of a violent crime in that country.

If this is the case, we can advise about making a claim, or you can apply directly through the European Commission's website:

[Language selection | European e-Justice Portal](#)

If the Member State does not accept applications in English or Irish, we can help you translate the application form and your answers.

If we receive correspondence on your claim from another Member State, we can pass it on to you if you wish.

If we do not meet your expectations

Appeals

You can appeal a first decision of the Tribunal made by one member of the Tribunal.

If you appeal the decision, three new Tribunal members will hear the appeal. Your application is considered afresh and without referring to the original decision.

If the administrative staff of the Tribunal do not meet your expectations, you can contact customer service in the Department of Justice. You can ask them questions, make suggestions or make a complaint about the service:

info@justice.ie

Contact details for the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal

Address:	The Chairperson, Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal, Department of Justice, Bishop's Square, Redmond's Hill, Dublin 2, D02 TD99.
Email:	criminalinjuries@justice.ie
Phone:	01 479 0290
Website:	www.gov.ie/criminalinjuries

Section 15: Department of Foreign Affairs

Supports for Irish victims of crime abroad and their families

This section of the Victims Charter is being included to recognise Irish victims of violent crime abroad and their family members. In particular, it is in memory of Danielle McLaughlin, Buncrana, Co Donegal.

Victims of crime abroad, and their families in Ireland, can avail of a range of help and supports here.

How Consular Assistance supports victims of crime

Staff in the Consular Assistance Unit in the Department of Foreign Affairs and in our embassies and consulates overseas receive specialist training.

They are experienced in dealing with issues that arise in relation to victims of crime abroad, including murder, violent or traumatic crime.

The Consular Assistance Unit, working with our embassies and consulates overseas, maintain contact with victims of crime abroad, and their families. They provide practical advice and support.

Where appropriate, they will also provide details of specialist services in Ireland, like those arranged by Advocates for Victims of Homicide (AdVIC) and Support after Homicide victim support services. AdVIC and Support after Homicide are well-established national organisations that provide confidential support to people whose lives have been affected by homicide.

Advocates for Victims of Homicide (AdVIC)

This is a service run by people who have been bereaved by homicide. It provides a professional counselling service and other essential psychological and practical supports. AdVIC advocates for greater rights for victims of homicide, their families and friends.

Support after Homicide

This is a national voluntary organisation. It offers essential emotional support and other practical information. This support is provided by professionally trained volunteers who respond to the particular needs of families bereaved by homicide.

Consular Assistance Unit

Where an Irish citizen has died abroad, the Consular Assistance Unit can provide information of repatriation services. These are services to return home the remains of the deceased. These details can include information about the Kevin Bell Repatriation Trust – a charity helping families whose loved ones died away from home.

What to expect from our Embassy or Consular Assistance Services

If you are a victim of a violent or traumatic crime abroad, we will work with our embassies and consulates to help you.

Respond quickly: We will respond quickly to your call and offer support and advice in a sensitive, compassionate way.

Language and culture support: We will offer language and cultural advice and support.

Local knowledge: We will offer advice about how local authorities work in the relevant country and who to contact.

Supports: We will direct you to local supports, where appropriate, in the relevant country.

Lawyers: We will provide a list of local English-speaking lawyers.

Police: We will help you in dealing with the local police.

Your family and friends: We will contact your family or friends on your behalf, if you would like us to do so.

Protect your information: We will safeguard your information in line with Ireland's Data Protection Acts.

We will not release information about your situation, even to your family, if you do not wish us to.

For victims of sexual offences

If you are the victim of a sexual offence, we will:

- show special sensitivity
- if possible, provide a consular staff member of the same gender
- if possible, accompany you to a medical facility to offer support
- give you details about any local support organisations for victims of sexual offences
- give you details of support services at home in Ireland
- help you to report the offence to the local authorities (for example, local police).

Stolen passports

If you are the victim of a stolen passport, we will help you to get an Emergency Travel Document, to help you return home.

What we cannot do

The Consular Assistance Unit in the Department of Foreign Affairs cannot:

- provide medical or legal advice
- interfere in judicial processes like court proceedings
- influence the visa decisions of other countries
- deal with commercial or insurance disputes.

We do not have a budget for medical, legal or other expenses.

Consular Assistance Charter

The Consular Assistance Charter (available on our website) provides more details on the type of help we can provide, and our values and commitments.

Consular Assistance is available and accessible 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

We also offer worldwide assistance through our embassies and consulates. For all embassy contact details, and up-to-date travel advice for over 200 countries

worldwide, see our:

[website](#)

Contact details for the Consular Assistance office

Phone, during office hours:	01 408 2527
Phone, in case of an emergency and out-of-hours:	01 408 2000
Website:	https://www.ireland.ie/en/dfa/overseas-travel/assistance-abroad/

If we do not meet your expectations

Please contact us if we do not meet your expectations and you would like to:

- ask a question
- make a suggestion
- complain about our consular assistance service.

Contact details for questions or complaints to the Consular Assistance Department

Address:	Consular Assistance Department of Foreign Affairs, Knockmaun House, 42-47 Mount Street Lower, Dublin 2, D02 TN83.
Phone:	During office hours: 01 408 2527 Outside office hours: 01 408 2000
Email:	consularfeed@dfa.ie
Website:	Assistance Abroad Travel Department Of Foreign Affairs Ireland.ie Ireland - this is Ireland

Section 16: Victims and the law

You have legal rights as a victim. Recent changes in European and Irish law have improved these rights.

European law

The EU Victims' Rights Directive came into force in November 2015. It brought major changes to the way victims of crime must be treated in Europe. The rights in the Victims' Rights Directive apply to anyone who falls victim to crime in Europe no matter what their nationality.

EU Member States, including Ireland, must ensure the rights in the Directive are available to victims. In Ireland, these rights became law in the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act, 2017.

Irish law

This section tells you about the main piece of legislation dealing with victims' rights in Ireland. It is the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act, 2017.

The Act says a 'victim' is a person who has suffered harm directly caused by a criminal offence. This includes physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss. The term 'victim' includes the family of a person whose death was caused by an offence.

The Act sets out the legal rights of victims in detail. Below are some examples of these.

Information

If you are a victim, you are entitled to clear and understandable information on the:

- criminal justice system and your role within it
- services and entitlements you can access
- progress of the investigation and any court proceedings.

You are also entitled to:

- be informed of a decision not to prosecute anyone for the offence committed against you
- ask for a review of that decision.

When a person is serving a prison sentence for an offence against you, you are entitled to information about their:

- release
- temporary release
- escape.

Written acknowledgement

You are entitled to a written acknowledgement of your complaint.

Interpretation and translation

You are entitled to interpretation and translation where needed to help you understand and be understood during the criminal justice process.

Your needs

You are entitled to have your individual needs assessed so that any specific protections or supports you need can be considered.

Everyone's needs are different

Different victims have different needs. The Victims of Crime Act focuses on the needs of victims as individuals. You can see the full list of rights set out in the Act at:

www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2017/act/28/enacted/en/pdf

State takes case against alleged offender

In our criminal justice system, the court may call a victim as a witness in a criminal case. However, the victim is not a party to the criminal case. This means that the victim is neither the person taking the case nor the defendant – and is not usually legally represented. It is the State that takes the case.

We outline issues relevant to victims as part of being in the criminal justice system. We do this in the following sections. These sections follow the course of a case:

1. [the investigation stage](#)
2. [a possible charge and bail, if granted](#)
3. [the court hearing](#)
4. [the conviction.](#)

After this, we give a brief account of the law on sexual and domestic violence. The section ends with an explanation of some criminal offences.

1. Investigation stage

Intimidation

It is a crime to harm or threaten:

- a witness
- a juror
- any family member of the victim
- anyone who is helping An Garda Síochána with an investigation.

You should tell An Garda Síochána if anyone has harmed or is threatening you as the victim of a crime.

Video evidence by children

A child victim (this means anyone under 18) can have their Garda interview recorded on video, and this recording can be used as evidence in court. This is so they don't have to give their account of events again in the courtroom on the day of the trial.

A Garda or other specially trained person must make the recording.

However, even if their evidence is videoed, they must be available on the day of the trial to answer questions about their video recording.

There are special facilities provided when a child under 18 is answering these questions. For example, they can be in a different room answering over live television link, or if they are in the courtroom they can be behind a screen. This means they cannot see the accused person and the accused person can't see them.

2. Possible charge and bail

A person who is charged with an offence may apply to the court for bail. Getting bail means that a person who is charged and is waiting for the trial to take place is not held in prison. A person who is charged with an offence (also known as 'the accused') is innocent until proven guilty.

When the accused cannot get bail

There are certain circumstances when the accused person cannot get bail. This includes where there is a risk that the accused person will interfere with witnesses, including the victim.

A person cannot get bail if there is a risk that they will not turn up for trial.

An accused person cannot get bail if they are accused of a serious offence and there is a risk that they will commit another serious offence if given bail. A serious offence is one for which the person could be sent to prison for five years or more if convicted.

When an accused person fails to get bail

If the accused person does not get bail, they are sent to prison. If the trial does not begin within four months of them first being refused bail, they can apply for bail again.

If the person gets bail, they must not commit any offences while on bail. They must also reappear in court at the end of the bail period.

The court may add other conditions to the bail, for example, the accused person may not be allowed to go to certain places. They may not be allowed to have contact with

certain people, including the victim or a member of the victim's family.

A Garda can apply to the court for a warrant to arrest someone on bail, if they believe that the person is about to break a condition of their bail. If a warrant is granted, the Garda can arrest the person and bring them to court. The court may send the person to prison.

A Garda may also arrest a person on bail without a warrant if the person has breached, is in the act of breaching, or is about to breach, a condition of their bail. This is when the Garda considers an arrest is needed to prevent harm to, interference with, or intimidation of:

- the victim of the alleged offence
- a witness to the alleged offence
- anyone whom the person on bail is not allowed to contact as a condition of bail.

If a person does not appear in court at the end of the bail period or breaks any other conditions of their bail, they may be arrested and brought to court. The court may then send the person to prison until the trial.

3. Court hearing

Live television-link evidence

Unless the court has a good reason against it, a person under 18 years of age may usually be allowed to give evidence to the court through a live television link. The court may also allow this for other people too. This can be allowed in cases involving:

- a violent offence
- sexual offence
- human trafficking.

The court may sometimes also allow people to give video evidence when they have been the victim of other offences. The court must first look at the circumstances of the case and the characteristics of the victim.

The court may also allow television-link evidence from another country. The judge

and lawyers in the court do not wear a wig or a gown when television-link evidence is being given by a person under 18.

Sometimes the court may allow a video recording of evidence to be used in later court hearings. This is when a person under 18 years of age gives evidence by live television link in the District Court in cases involving offences that involve:

- violent crimes
- sexual crimes
- human trafficking.

Legal aid in rape and sexual assault cases

The Legal Aid Board offers an advice service for victims of rape and other serious sexual assault whose cases are going to court.

Sometimes in a rape or other serious sexual assault case, the accused applies to the court to raise issues about the victim's prior sexual experience. If they do this in your case, the Legal Aid Board can provide you with legal advice and representation to defend any application to examine your sexual experience.

If during a rape or other serious sexual assault case, the accused applies to have your counselling records disclosed (shared), the Legal Aid Board can represent you in that application.

These services are free to you. For more information see: Section 12: Legal Aid Board.

4. Conviction

Victim impact statement

A court must take into account any impact that the crime has on the victim when deciding the sentence for any crime.

If a person is convicted for the crime against you, you can make a Victim Impact Statement about how the crime has affected you. The statement can be made in person or through a legal representative.

Where the victim has died as a result of the crime, the family can apply to tell the court about the impact of the death on them.

Where a victim cannot speak for themselves, the family can apply to tell the court about the impact of the crime on the victim.

Read more information on Victim Impact Statements in the following booklet prepared by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

https://www.dppireland.ie/app/uploads/2019/03/ENG_Making_a_Victim_Impact_Statement_Sept_2018.pdf

Victim impact report

The court can ask a professional person, like a probation officer or a member of a rape crisis centre, to prepare a written report on the crime's impact on the victim.

This victim impact report can deal with the physical, emotional, mental, economic or sexual harm which the victim has suffered as a result of the crime.

This is different from a victim impact statement.

Law and sexual and domestic violence

Sexual violence

In a rape or sexual assault case, the name of the victim is not made public.

Only those with a direct interest in the case, and the media, can be present in court in a rape or serious sexual assault case. The media cannot report details which may identify a victim.

A parent, relation or friend can accompany the victim to the court.

The following booklet, produced by the Rape Crisis Network of Ireland, provides a detailed guide to the legal process for survivors of sexual violence.

www.rcni.ie/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-the-Legal-Process-for-Survivors-of-Sexual-Violence-2nd-Edition-3.pdf

Domestic violence

Domestic violence takes place within a close, intimate or family relationship. It is the physical, emotional, sexual or mental abuse of one person by another. Domestic violence can affect a diverse range of victims and perpetrators, including:

- spouses
- children
- parents
- partners.

Court orders

The Civil Courts can order people to behave in a certain way. These are called court orders. In cases involving domestic violence, the Civil Courts can grant a wide range of different orders including the following.

A safety order

A safety order directs a named person not to use or threaten violence. It also orders them not to molest or make fearful the person who has applied for the order or any other dependent people, including children.

It can also order the named person, if they live somewhere else, not to watch the home of the:

- person who has applied for the order, or
- dependent person.

A barring order

This orders a named person to leave the place where:

- the person who has applied for the order lives, or
- where a dependent person lives.

They must not enter that place unless the court allows them to do so.

A safety order or barring order can order a person not to communicate with the

person who has applied for the order or a dependent person. This includes communication by electronic means (for example, Facebook posts, X feeds, email, and so on).

Orders in urgent cases

A safety order or a barring order can take a number of weeks to process. In urgent cases, a person can ask for the following orders.

An interim barring order

This is like a barring order, except that it takes effect immediately and lasts until the court can consider the application for a full barring order. The court grants this if there is immediate risk of major harm to the person applying for the order, or to dependent people, including children.

The court can grant the order without the person named in the order being present in the court or without notice being given to that person. When a person is not present in court they are referred to as 'ex parte'.

A protection order

This is like a safety order, except that it takes effect immediately. It lasts until the court can consider an application for a full safety order or barring order.

An emergency barring order

This is like an interim barring order, but it is available to some people who are not entitled to apply for a barring order or an interim barring order. For example, if they are not married or in a civil partnership with the other person.

In certain cases, Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, can look for orders on behalf of a person.

A breach of a domestic violence order is a criminal offence. If a person fails to obey one of these orders, they have committed a criminal offence. These include:

- safety order
- barring order

- interim barring order
- emergency barring order
- a protection order against a person.

Sometimes a court gives a barring order, an interim barring order, or an emergency barring order about a particular place. This means it sets down conditions about how, or if, a named person may be at or enter a particular place.

If this named person prevents the person who secured the court order from getting into the place or tries to prevent them from getting in, they have committed a criminal offence. In addition, the named person must not get in the way of any dependent child getting into the place.

Anyone who commits one of these offences can be prosecuted in court. If they are found guilty, they can be fined, or sent to prison, or both. The court may also punish the person for being in contempt of court.

Coercive control

The Domestic Violence Act, 2018 has also introduced a new offence of coercive control. Coercive control is psychological abuse in an intimate relationship. It can involve controlling behaviour. This abuse must cause fear of violence or serious alarm or distress that has a substantial adverse impact on a person's day-to-day activities.

A person who commits this offence can be prosecuted in court. If they are found guilty, they can be fined or sent to prison or both.

Other criminal offences

The criminal law includes many different offences. This section briefly explains some of the main offences. (We list these alphabetically).

Assault

An assault is where a person uses force on another person, or threatens to use force, without the agreement of the other person. Assault causing harm or causing serious harm are more serious offences.

Burglary

A burglary is where a person enters a building without permission in order to steal or do damage. Serious or 'aggravated' burglary is where the burglar has a weapon or explosive.

Dangerous driving

Dangerous driving is driving that is dangerous to the public. Such cases consider the:

- condition of the vehicle
- place
- amount of actual traffic
- level of traffic that might be expected.

Dangerous driving causing death or dangerous driving causing serious bodily harm are two serious driving offences.

Harassment

The crime of harassment is when someone persistently follows, watches, pesters or subjects another person to communications without a legal reason or reasonable excuse to do so.

Human trafficking

Human trafficking is where a person recruits, moves, accommodates, employs or takes charge of another adult or child to exploit them:

- for work
- sexually or
- to remove their organs.

If an Irish person commits one of these trafficking offences in another country, they can be brought to court in Ireland and may be convicted. If anyone commits one of these offences against an Irish citizen in another country, they can be brought to court in Ireland and may be convicted.

Murder and manslaughter

Murder occurs when a person plans to kill or cause serious injury to someone and kills that person.

Manslaughter occurs when a person kills someone but did not intend to do so.

Manslaughter can also occur if the person plans to kill or cause serious injury, but they are out of control because they:

- have been provoked or
- mistakenly think that their actions are needed for self-defence.

Sexual offences including rape

Rape means having sexual intercourse or any other form of sexual penetration with someone without their consent.

Consent means both people agree to sex. Agreement must be freely given – a person cannot consent to sex, for example if they:

- are too young
- don't understand what they are doing
- are asleep
- are too drunk to make a decision

- are forced to agree out of fear.

A person can change their mind at any time and withdraw their consent. Rape includes forcing someone to continue with sex after they have changed their mind.

Sexual assault means any sexual touching or contact without consent.

‘Aggravated’ sexual assault means a sexual assault that was made worse because of:

- violence
- threats
- humiliating the victim
- causing the victim injury.

Theft

A theft is where a person takes property without the permission of its owner and without any intention of ever returning it.

(A robbery is where a person uses or threatens to use force while carrying out a theft.)

Guide to legal terms

The National Adult Literacy Agency also has a useful book explaining legal terms:

[A plain English guide to legal terms](#)

Section 17: Victim Support Services

As a victim of crime, you have the right to receive support services free of charge.

Non-governmental victim support groups in Ireland play a vital role in helping crime victims. They provide support services directly to victims and their families and friends. These services also help people to understand how to enforce their rights as victims of crime.

Below is a list of a wide range of victim support services available for victims of crime. It is in alphabetical order.

If you are not sure what support service is the right one for you, you can ring your local [Garda Victim Service Office](#)

Contact details for the National Crime Victims Helpline

Freephone	116 006
Text:	085 133 7711
e-mail	info@crimevictimshelpline.ie

Table 1- Victim Support Service Organisations *

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
Adapt Domestic Abuse Services (Limerick)	Domestic violence support	1800 200 504	www.adaptservices.ie info@adaptservices.ie
AdVIC (Advocates for Victims of Homicide)	Support to families of homicide victims	1800 852 000	www.advic.ie info@advic.ie
ASSC (Accompaniment Support Services for Children)	Support to child victims of crime	083 203 0209	www.assc.ie support@assc.ie
Amber Women's Refuge CLG	Domestic violence support	1850 424 244	www.kilkennywomensrefuge.ie info@amberwomensrefuge.ie
Aoibhneas	Domestic violence support	01 867 0701	www.aoibhneas.ie/ helpline@aoibhneas.org
Ascend	Domestic violence support	0505-23999	www.ntdc.ie ascend@ntdc.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
Athlone Midland Rape Crisis Centre	Support service to victims of sexual violence	1800 306 600	www.amrcc.ie info@amrcc.ie
Barnardos	Support to child victims of crime	01 453 0355	www.barnardos.ie info@barnardos.ie
Beacon of Light Counselling Centre	Counselling service to victims of crime	01 457 8700	www.beaconoflight.ie office@beaconoflight.ie
Bray Women's Refuge	Domestic violence support	01 286 6163	https://anuwicklow.ie
CARI	Support to child victims of crime	1890 924 567	www.cari.ie info@cari.ie
Carlow and South Leinster Rape Crisis Centre	Support service to victims of sexual violence	1800 727 737	https://www.carlow-kildare-slrcs.ie info@carlow-kildare-slrcs.ie
Carlow Women's Aid	Domestic violence support	1800 444 944	www.carlowwomensaid.ie info@carlowwomensaid.ie
Clare Haven Services	Domestic violence support	065 682 2435	www.clarehaven.ie clientcare@clarehaven.ie
COPE Galway Modh Eile House	Domestic violence support	091 565 985	https://www.copegalway.ie info@copegalway.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
Cork Sexual Violence Centre	Support service to victims of sexual violence	021 450 5577	https://www.sexualviolence.ie/info@sexualviolence.ie
Cuan Saor Women's Refuge Ltd.	Domestic violence support	1800 57 67 57	www.cuansaor.org support@cuansaor.org
Dignity 4 Patients	Services to patients who are victims of crime	041 984 3730	www.dignity4patients.org/support@dignity4patients.org
Domestic Violence Advocacy Centre (Sligo)	Domestic violence support	071 914 1515	www.domesticviolence.ie support@dvas.ie
Domestic Violence Response Galway	Domestic violence support	091 866 740	www.domesticviolenceresponse.com info@domesticviolenceresponse.com
Donegal Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre	Support service to victims of sexual violence	1800 44 88 44	http://www.donegalrapecrisis.ie/info@donegalrapecrisis.ie
Donegal Women's Centre	Counselling services	074 912 4985	www.donegalwomenscentre.ie/donegalwomenscentre@gmail.com
Donegal Domestic	Domestic violence support.	1800 262 677	https://www.donegaldomesticviolenceservices.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
Violence Services			refuge@ddvs1.com
Domestic Violence Response Galway	Domestic violence support.	091 866 740	www.domesticviolenceresponse.com info@domesticviolenceresponse.com
Drogheda Women's Refuge and Children's Refuge Centre	Domestic violence support.	041 984 4550	www.droghedarefuge.org supportservices@droghedarefuge.org
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre	Support service to victims of sexual violence.	National 24- Hour Helpline 1800 778888	www.drcc.ie info@rcc.ie
Dundalk Counselling Service	Counselling service to victims of crime.	042 933 8333	www.dundalkcounsellingcentre.ie info@dundalkcounsellingcentre.ie
Esker House Women's Refuge	Domestic violence support.	090 647 4122	www.eskerhouse.ie info@eskerhouse.ie
Galway Rape Crisis Centre	Support service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 355 355	www.galwayrcc.org helpline@grcc.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
Greystones Family Resource Centre	Domestic violence support.	01 255 7528	www.greystonesfrc.ie ask@greystonesfrc.ie
Hope Trust	Counselling services.	085 114 0983	www.hopetrust.ie hopecounselling.ie@gmail.com
Irish Road Victims Association	Support to those bereaved or injured by road traffic collisions.	Helpline 086 863 4194	www.irva.ie
Irish Tourist Assistance Service	Frontline services to tourist victims of crime.	01 666 9354	https://www.touristsos.ie _ info@touristsos.ie
Kerry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre	Support Service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 633 333	http://www.krsac.com/ kerryrapecrisis@krsac.com
Adapt Kerry, Women's Refuge and Support Services	Domestic violence support.	066 712 9100	www.kerryrefuge.com generalmanager@kerryrefuge.com
Kilkenny Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre	Support Service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 478 478	https://kasa.ie info@kasa.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
Laois Domestic Abuse Service	Domestic violence support.	057 867 1100	www.laoisdomesticabuseservice.ie lina@laoisdomesticabuseservice.ie
Le Chéile	Restorative justice service.	01 214 4350	www.lecheile.ie info@lecheile.ie
Living Life Voluntary Counselling Centre	Counselling services.	01 286 6729	www.livinglifecounselling.com info@livinglifecounselling.com
Longford Women's Link	Domestic violence support.	043 334 1511	https://www.lwl.ie/ info@lwl.ie
Mayo Rape Crisis Centre	Support service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 234 900	https://www.mrcc.ie/ info@mrcc.ie
Mayo Women's Support Services	Domestic violence support.	094 902 5409	www.mwss.ie
Meath Women's Refuge	Domestic violence support.	1800 46 46 46	https://www.dvservicesmeath.ie support@dvservicesmeath.ie
Men's Aid	Domestic violence (support to male victims).	01 554 3811	https://www.mensaid.ie hello@mensaid.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
Men's Development Network (MEND - Men Ending Domestic Abuse)	Domestic violence support: Carlow/Kilkenny Laois/Offaly Kildare. Tipperary South Waterford Wexford.	051 844260	www.mensnetwork.ie/mendmen@mensnetwork.ie
Missing in Ireland Support Services	Support services to relatives and friends of missing persons.	1800 442 552	www.missingpersons.ie office@nmph.ie
Mná Feasa Domestic Violence Project	Domestic violence support.	021 421 1757	www.mnafeasa.com mnafeasa@gmail.com
MOVE Ireland (Men overcoming violence)	Domestic violence support programmes currently run in: Athlone, Cork Dublin (Swords, Tallaght, City Central) Galway, Kerry Limerick/Clare	065 684 8689	www.moveireland.ie move@moveireland.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
	Meath, Sligo Tipperary North.		
National Crime Victims Helpline	National helpline service to for crime victims.	Freephone: 116 006 or Text: 085 133 7711	www.crimevictimshelpline.ie info@crimevictimshelpline.ie
North East Domestic Violence Intervention Programme (NEDVIP)	Domestic violence support (programmes currently run in North East region).	042 935 9755	N/A
Oasis House Women's Refuge Waterford	Domestic violence support.	1890 264 364	www.waterforddirectoryofservices.ie/directory/oasis-house-womens-refuge-2/ projectworker@oasishouse.ie
Offaly Domestic Violence Support Service	Domestic violence support.	057 935 1886	www.odvss.ie info@odvss.ie
One in Four	Counselling and advocacy services to men and women who are adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.	01 662 4070	www.oneinfour.ie info@oneinfour.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
PARC Road Safety Group	Practical support and information for families of road traffic victims.	086 377 3784	https://www.parcroadsafety.ie
Rape Crisis Centre Midwest	Support service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 311 511	www.rapecrisis.ie info@rapecrisis.ie
Rape Crisis Centre North East	Support service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 212 122	https://www.rcne.ie info@rcne.ie
Rape Crisis Ireland	Representative body and support service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 778 888	https://www.rapecrisisireland.ie info@rcni.ie
Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan	Support service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 750 780	http://www.srcc.ie info@srcc.ie
Rape Crisis Northern Ireland	Support service to victims of sexual violence.	(+44) 0800 0246 991	https://rapecrisisni.org.uk emailsupport@rapecrisisni.org.uk

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
Regional Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre Tullamore	Support service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 32 32 32	https://www.tullamorerapecrisis.ie rapecrisiscentretullamore@gmail.com
Restorative Justice in the Community (based in Nenagh)	Restorative justice service (offers victims the opportunity to take part in restorative justice process).	067 41565	http://rjc.ie/ info@rjc.ie
Restorative Justice Services	Restorative justice service (offers victims the opportunity to take part in restorative justice process).	01 672 4446	www.rjs.ie offices@rjs.ie
Roscommon Safe Link	Domestic violence support.	071 966 4200	www.roscommonsafelink.ie info@roscommonsafelink.ie
SAFE Ireland	National social change agency – domestic violence support.	090 647 9078	www.safeireland.ie info@safeireland.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
Sage Advocacy	National advocacy service for older people.	01 536 7330	www.sageadvocacy.ie info@sageadvocacy.ie
Saoirse Domestic Violence Services	Domestic violence support.	1800 911 221	https://sdvs.ie helpline@sdvs.ie
Sexual Violence Centre Cork	Support service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 496 496	www.sexualviolence.ie info@sexualviolence.ie
Sonas Dublin	Domestic violence support.	087 952 5217	www.domesticabuse.ie info@sonasdomesticabuse.ie
Support After Homicide	Support to families of homicide victims.	087 983 7322	www.supportafterhomicide.ie support@supportafterhomicide.ie
Teach Tearmainn Kildare	Domestic violence support.	045 535 178	www.teachtearmainn.ie helpline@teachtearmainn.ie
Tearmann Domestic Abuse Services for Cavan and Monaghan	Domestic violence support.	047 72311	N/A

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
Tipperary Rape Crisis and Counselling Centre	Support service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 340 340	https://trcc.ie info@trcc.ie
Victim Support at court	Specialist court support service to victims of crime.	01 872 6785	www.vsac.ie info@vsac.ie
Waterford Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (WRSAC)	Support service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 296 296	www.waterfordrsac.ie info@waterfordrsac.ie
West Cork Women's Project	Domestic violence support.	1800 203 136	www.westcorkwomensproject.ie svsupport@westcorkbeacon.ie
Westmeath Support Service against Domestic Abuse	Domestic violence support.	044 933 3868	www.wssada.ie info@wssada.ie
Wexford Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Service	Support service to victims of sexual violence.	1800 33 00 33	www.wexfordrapecrisis.com support@wexfordrapecrisis.com
Wexford Women's Refuge	Domestic violence support.	1800 220 444	https://wexfordwomensrefuge.ie office@wexfordwomensrefuge.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address or email
Women's Aid	Domestic violence support.	24hr national helpline 1800 341 900	www.womensaid.ie info@womensaid.ie
Women's Aid Dundalk	Domestic violence support.	042 933 3244	www.womensaiddundalk.net info@womensaiddundalk.net
You Are Not Alone (YANA)	Domestic violence support.	022 53915	N/A

*Please note that Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, is the primary State funding agency of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence support services. See Tusla website at www.tusla.ie for more information.

Sexual Assault Treatment Units

The Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATU) are run by the HSE. They are safe places you can go to when you have, or think you may have been, raped or sexually assaulted. The units look after all genders and gender identities, aged 14 years and over.

There are six units in Ireland. They are in:

1. [Cork](#)
2. [Donegal](#)
3. [Dublin](#)
4. [Galway](#)
5. [Mullingar](#)
6. [Waterford](#)

(There is also a note on the [Mid-West Forensic Service](#) later in this document.)

The contact details are listed alphabetically. An Garda Síochána will arrange an appointment for you to attend your local unit and bring you there if you wish.

Specialist support workers including psychological support workers are available to all patients attending the units. Each member of staff in the units has received specialised training to provide care and treatment to victims of these crimes. They will treat you in a respectful, person-centred, non-judgmental way.

Cork Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Treatment available	24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
Clinic hours	Monday – Friday, 8am to 4:30pm
Location	South Infirmary/Victoria University Hospital, Cork, T12 X23H.
Phone: weekdays from 8am to 4.30pm	021 492 6297
Phone: weekends and after 4.30pm	021 492 6100 – Ask for SATU

Donegal Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Treatment and care available	24 hours a day 365 days a year.
Phone To speak with a Forensic Clinical Examiner to arrange a private appointment please contact 24-hour On-call SATU:	Mobile 087 068 1964

Dublin Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Service available	24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
Location	Rotunda Hospital, Dublin 1, D01 P5W9.
Phone: weekdays from 8am to 5pm	01 817 1736
Phone: after 5pm and weekends	01 817 1700 – Ask for SATU

Galway Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Service available	24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
Located	Faustina House, The Willow Centre IDA Small Business Centre, Tuam Rd, Galway, H91 VW84.
Phone: weekdays from 8am to 4pm	091 765 751 or 087 633 8118.
Phone: after 4pm and weekends	091 757 631 or 091 524 222 – Ask for SATU.
For out of regular hours help	Contact your local Garda station.

Mullingar Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Service available	24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
Location	Midland Regional Hospital, Mullingar N91 NA43.
Phone: weekdays from 8am to 5pm	044 939 4239 or 086 040 9952

Phone: after 5pm and weekends	044 934 0221 – Ask for SATU.
For out of hours help	Contact your local Garda Station.

Waterford Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Service available	24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
Location	University Hospital Waterford.
Phone: weekdays from 8am to 5pm	051 842 157
Phone: after 5pm and weekends	051 848 000 – Ask for SATU.

Sexual assault services available in the Midwest area

The Mid-West Forensic Medical Examination Service (FME) was established in 2006. It provides a comprehensive out-of-hours Forensic Medical Examination Service.

This service is open to males and females aged 14 years and older who have experienced rape or sexual assault and are referred to our services by An Garda Síochána.

Service available	Monday to Friday 6pm to 8am, and 24 hours over weekends and Public Holidays. On-call commitment provided by six Forensic Clinical Examiners (General Practitioners) through Shannondoc.
Location	Mid-western Regional Hospital Limerick Outpatients Department.
Phone: Shannondoc	1850 212 999
During office hours	Contact Galway SATU or Cork SATU. Contact details above in points 4 (Galway) and point 1 (Cork).



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