Victims Charter

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

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 crime victims. This Charter is divided into sections as follows:

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Section 1 defines what is understood by victim and about the charters in this document. Each section in sections 2 to 14 inclusive gives an overview of the following:

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

In addition to the information given in each section, Section 15 gives a general summary of victims and the law, and the final section, Section 16, 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 primarily 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 15 of this Charter.

Section 1
Starting out

'A 'victim' means:

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. (This does not include family members who have been charged with or are under investigation in connection with the death.)

This definition is taken from the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act, 2017, section 2(1) and 2(2).

Every organisation named in this Charter will:

- speak or write to you in simple and easy-to-understand language, taking account of your ability to understand and to make yourself understood;
- be sensitive to your needs if you cannot read or write very well;
- provide an interpreter and translation if English is not your first language so that you can take part in the investigation **or** to act as a witness in court;
- take your specific needs and requirements into account if you have any form of disability;
- 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 of your specific needs, 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 interferes with a criminal investigation;
- it might damage a criminal case before the courts, now or in the future;
- it might endanger someone's personal safety;
- it might endanger the security of the state.

Any decision not to give you information for any of these reasons must be made by a person authorised to make these decisions.

Section 2
Crime Victims Helpline

The role of the Crime Victims Helpline

The Crime Victims Helpline is a confidential national helpline run by a team of trained volunteers and staff. We are here to listen. We support everyone who is affected by crime no matter when the crime took place, who committed the crime, or whether or not the crime was reported to the Gardaí. We understand the issues and difficulties that victims of crime have to deal with, and we try to help you so that you do not feel alone.

We are funded by the Department of Justice and Equality. The Department funds a wide range of organisations that support victims of crime. 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 the 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;
- we will listen with empathy and 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 – such as domestic violence, rape, sexual abuse and murder;
- we can answer your questions about the criminal justice system;

- we can help you make contact with the Gardaí and other agencies and services**;** and
- we can give you information about compensation, if this applies to your case.

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. If you ask us a question that we don't know the answer to, we'll find out for you.

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.

You can contact the helpline at:
Freephone: 116 006 - See website at www.crimevictimshelpline.ie
for operating hours
Email: info@crimevictimshelpline.ie
Text: 085-133 7711
Website: www.crimevictimshelpline.ie

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.

Where to contact:	
Address:	Executive Director Crime Victims Helpline 6 - 7 Hanover Street East Dublin 2 D02 W320
Tel number:	01-408 6118
Email:	info@crimevictimshelpline.ie
Website:	www.crimevictimshelpline.ie

Section 3
An Garda Síochána

The role of An Garda Siochána

The mission of An Garda Síochána is ***'Keeping People Safe'*** which is also the guiding principle on which strategic and operational decisions will be based.

An Garda Síochána is a victim-centred police service, focussed on keeping people safe, protecting the most vulnerable and providing a consistently high standard of service.

We will be responsive to the needs of victims, 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; and
- 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 the matter in a proactive and timely way to help to bring those responsible to justice.

In helping you, An Garda Síochána is committed to maintaining a supportive relationship with you, and we will work to address your concerns and needs.

We will also look to ensure that your legal rights to information, advice and other appropriate assistance are met effectively and efficiently.

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

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

It is also the case that the welfare of, and support for, victims is central to our partnership with community groups, voluntary organisations and other statutory agencies.

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 and investigate your incident; and
- we will give you the name, phone number and station of the investigating Garda, and the 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 given to your incident so that we can quickly find the details of your case if you contact us for updates.

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

Contact details for Garda Victims Service Offices www.garda.ie/en/victim-services/find-my-local-victim-service-office/

The information and support we can offer you

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, on first contact with a Garda, we will offer you information about:

- how to report an incident to us; and
- 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; or
- support services in your home country if you live outside Ireland.

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

Help for you

We will tell you about special supports and practices that you might find helpful – like bringing someone with you to the Garda Station to report a crime, or being interviewed by someone of the same gender.

Compensation

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

Legal aid and expenses

We will give you information about how to access legal aid and whether you are entitled to expenses in certain circumstances. Read more detailed information on legal aid in section 11 of the Charter covering the 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. (They are necessary to investigate the alleged offence.)

If the Gardaí reasonably believe that the presence of the person accompanying you would not be in your best interests or would harm any investigation or criminal proceedings, they may stop that person from accompanying you. This includes cases when you are reporting incidents to, or attending interviews with, An Garda Siochána.

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 request details of any significant developments in the investigation. We consider significant developments to include:

- the arrest and charging of a person;

- the nature of the offence with which they were charged;
- the release on bail of a person (temporary release while waiting for their trial) **or** 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; and
- information on any release of a person or their escape from custody.

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

As a victim, and with your co-operation, as part of our investigation we will assess your needs to find out if there are any issues about how safe and vulnerable you might be in terms of:

- 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); or
- re-victimisation (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; or
- 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.

We can also look to provide you with information on the victim support services available in your home country.

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, 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; and
- give you details about any local support organisations for victims of sexual offences.

Children

We recognise that child victims will always require special consideration in relation to their needs.

Because of this we will make sure that if you are under 18 that we will tell you of any particular measures, procedures or arrangements available that may help you as a child victim of crime.

In considering any special measures put in place to support you, we will take you best interests into account

We will respect your views and take them into account having regard to 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 also keep you up to date on the progress of your case as well as keeping your parent, guardian or representative up to date if you wish.

Victims of domestic abuse

In cases of domestic abuse, we will take appropriate action to protect victims and / or any of their family members who may be under threat from the perpetrators of such abuse.

This will include ensuring that victims are provided with 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 Garda 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 get somebody who will support you to tell your story through sign language.

Please let us know if you have any particular needs and let us know if there are particular supports we could provide to assist 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, provide you with a leaflet in your own language which contains all the information you will need.

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; and
- put you in contact with the Garda Diversity Officer in your area.

Crimes committed by children (under 18 years of age)

When a child has carried out the crime you have reported, your views will be taken into account when the Director of National Juvenile Office considers **and** determines whether or not the child should be included

under the Youth Diversion Programme[1]. They will also consider other matters such as the recommendation of the local Juvenile Diversion 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) and may also be supervised, by their local Juvenile Diversion Officer, for a period of time.

We may invite you:

- to be present if we are cautioning (warning) the child; and
- to a Garda Family Conference – this is a meeting where 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. At this meeting the child's behaviour will be discussed with regard to its effect 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 not suitable 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.

[1] www.garda.ie/en/crime-prevention/community-engagement/community-engagement-offices/garda-youth-diversion-bureau

Restorative justice

Restorative justice is when a voluntary meeting can take place between a victim, an offender and an independent person skilled at managing such meetings.

At the meeting, the victim can tell their 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 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.

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 ask questions of the offender to make them aware of the effect on you of what they have done.

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

If you or a family member are victims of certain serious crimes (such as a murder, road collision, kidnapping or serious assault), a Family Liaison Officer may be appointed 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 appropriate support services also available to you.

An Garda Síochána decisions on prosecutions

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 in the name 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 Diversion Programme rather than being brought to court.

Where An Garda Síochána decides to prosecute **or** not to prosecute a person following an investigation into an incident you reported to us, we will write to you to let you know of that decision. Sometimes we tell you this in person.

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.

When an Investigation File has been submitted to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) about the incident you reported to An Garda Síochána, the DDP will decide on whether to start a prosecution or not. The DPP Office will notify you of the decision.

As outlined in Section 6 of this Charter, you can seek the reasons for the decisions made by the Office of the DPP and/or to seek a review of decisions made.

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, as follows:

> **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.
>
> **Review of the 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 make either request you must complete a form:

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

You can get these forms at any Garda station.

These time-limits (28 days or 56 days) may be extended where the Gardaí or Director of Public Prosecutions, as appropriate, is satisfied that it is warranted (necessary).

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.

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 such arranging for you to enter and exit the court building through a private route not open to the public.

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

- excluding the public or certain people from the court; **or**
- 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 for the crime against you, you can make a Victim Impact Statement setting out how the crime has affected you.

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

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 your local Garda station and ask for the officer in charge or contact the Garda Victim Liaison Office.

How to contact us	
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.
Tel:	01-666 3349 or 01-666 3453
Email:	crimevictims@garda.ie
Website:	www.garda.ie
The email address is monitored during business hours, and we will respond to your query as soon as possible.	

If you wish, you may also refer your concerns and / or make a complaint to the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission	
Address:	150 Abbey Street Upper Dublin 1 D01 FT73.
Tel numbers:	LoCall 1890 600 800 01-871 6727

If you wish, you may also refer your concerns and / or make a complaint to the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission	
Email:	info@gsoc.ie
Website:	www.gardaombudsman.ie

Section 4
Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission

The Role of GSOC

GSOC – the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission – was set up in 2007 to deal with complaints against Gardaí.

Any member of the public can make a complaint to us about a Garda. These complaints are handled in different ways depending on what the complaint is about. Our office also investigates incidents where a complaint has not been made, but GSOC thinks it is in the best interest of the public to do so. GSOC 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 GSOC

GSOC aims to treat the people who make complaints to us in a sensitive and understanding manner, while trying to resolve the issue as fairly as possible.

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 www.gardaombudsman.ie/

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 Garda 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 supports;
- tell you what type of investigation will be undertaken;
- write to tell you if we decide not to investigate your complaint and tell you the reasons why.

How we will investigate your complaint

We will investigate your complaint as follows.

We will:

- interview you in a way that is sensitive to your needs in a place that we think is suitable for you and as soon as we can. 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 that happens, you can choose someone else;
- gather the available evidence in a fair and impartial manner;
- assess whether you need special protection and, if that is the case, we will let you know the possible options open to you;
- let you know what will be required of you during the investigation;
- keep in regular contact with you to let you know how the investigation is going; and
- always give you contact details so you can contact us if you need to.

What happens after GSOC investigates your complaint

Following a GSOC 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) and ask 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 request the reasons why, either through us or directly from the DPP. If they decide 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 GSOC 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 manner.

GSOC hopes to meet your needs by:

Listening 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.

Processing complaints efficiently

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

Being 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 manner.

Being open and honest at all times

We will answer your questions as fully as we can.

Protecting your privacy

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

Being accessible

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

How GSOC responds to different categories of complainants

GSOC recognises that different categories of complainants might need additional supports such as follows:

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

We will treat you with special sensitivity and we will:

- assign your complaint to a GSOC officer of the same gender, if you wish;
- provide you, if you request it and if it is possible, 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 GSOCs remit we will provide you with a Family Liaison Officer who will keep in contact with you and any other person that you have asked to help you. The Family Liaison Officer will be able to give you information about support services. GSOC will make sure that you receive the same information and treatment as any other complainant.

Children

If you are under 18, GSOC will respect your views and take them into account having regard to your age and understanding. GSOC 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;
- comply with the guidelines under Children First (guidelines to protect the welfare of children); and
- ensure your safety and protection.

As well as keeping your parent, guardian or representative informed, 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

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 us	
Address:	Corporate Services Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission 150 Upper Abbey Street, Dublin 1 D01 FT73
Tel numbers:	1890 600 800 or 01-871 6600
Fax:	01-814 7023
Email:	info@gsoc.ie
Website:	www.gardaombudsman.ie/

Section 5
Courts Service

Role of the Courts Service

The Courts Service was set up in November 1999 to manage all the different kinds of courts in Ireland. (There is a guide at the end of this section which 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. Our mandate [authority] is set out in the Courts Service Act, 1998.

The Courts Service:

- is responsible for management and administration of the courts;
- provides support services for judges;
- provides facilities for court users;
- manages and maintains court buildings; and
- takes into account the needs of court users, including crime victims, when developing policies and strategies to carry out our work to a high standard.

Please note that we cannot comment on or intervene in any way in matters about sentencing and the giving of evidence by victims. These are matters for the judge, who 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.

What you can expect from the Courts Service

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

Facilities

Dedicated rooms: Victim waiting rooms are available in almost all refurbished courthouses and also 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 Letterkenny, Wexford, Cork (Washington Street and Anglesea Street), Limerick (Mulgrave Street), Waterford and Mullingar. Arrangements are in place to reserve consultation rooms for victims in other venues, if required.

Rooms will be specially set aside for victims and vulnerable witnesses in all future projects to refurbish buildings.

Video link facilities: Video link facilities are available in 18 Court buildings around the country. Video link allows you to give evidence in a different room to where the court is being held.
In liaison with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), the prosecuting member of An Garda Síochána will arrange – with the Courts Service – a video link for taking evidence.

You will be consulted 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.

Option of screens: screens are available in the Criminal Courts of Justice, Dundalk Courthouse, Cork (Anglesea Street) and Limerick (Mulgrave Street) to enable you to give evidence in Court without seeing the accused person.

In co-operation with the office of the DPP, the prosecuting member of An Garda Síochána will talk you through the procedure if you wish to give evidence behind a screen. A case can be transferred 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, reserve seating and other help: you can visit the courthouse before the trial by prior arrangement 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, such as an application for a protection order, can still be heard at other times as well.

Our Victim liaison officers within each of our offices can arrange with the prosecuting member of An Garda Síochána or the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for you to access to victim rooms, if they are available.

They can also reserve family seating for appropriate/sensitive cases, and organise advance visits to courthouses. They can also 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 www.courts.ie will give 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, and
- Romanian.

The website includes a section for people who are going to court for the first time, including as a victim or a witness, as well as 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 and 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 so that they can 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

If you as a victim of crime are unhappy with the service available in a courthouse, you should, first of all, raise this with the victim liaison officer for that courthouse and/or the office manager for that courthouse.

If, after raising your concerns, you are not satisfied with the help provided in a courthouse, you should make your complaint in writing to us. To do this, you use the formal customer complaints procedure and the Customer Service Complaint Form, which are available on the Courts Service website www.courts.ie

The completed Customer Complaints Form can be forwarded to us by post or by email. The addresses are given here:

How to contact us		
Region:	**Customer Complaints Officers by region**	**Email and phone contacts**
Dublin courts	Susan Cahill	01-888 6155 susancahill@courts.ie
Southern (Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary)	Ruth Penny	021-450 9374 southerncustomercomplaints@courts.ie
Western (Clare, Donegal Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo)	Pat Conlon	094-904 3863 westerncustomercomplaints@courts.ie

How to contact us		
North Midlands (Cavan, Longford, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Westmeath)	Alan Cooke	042-939 2345 northmidlandscustomercomplaints@courts.ie
Eastern (Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Offaly, Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow)	Grace Murphy	045-980103 easterncustomercomplaints@courts.ie
Criminal Courts of Justice	Bernard Regan	01-798 8268 berndardjregan@courts.ie

All complaints will be dealt with promptly, and in a fair and courteous manner.

The Courts Service is subject to review by the Office of the Ombudsman in respect of the performance of administrative functions.

Your guide to the criminal courts

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

Court	Criminal cases heard	Heard by	Location
District Court	Minor offences	One judge, no jury	130 courthouses nationwide
Circuit Court	More serious offences, but not offences such as murder, rape, serious sexual assault Also deals with appeals from the District Court	One judge with jury	8 circuits with at least one Circuit Court sitting in each county
High Court	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	One judge with jury	Criminal Courts of Justice in Dublin and locations outside Dublin from time to time
Special Criminal Court (set up in 1972)	Specified offences, mainly related to terrorism and serious 'organised' crime	Three judges, no jury	Criminal Courts of Justice in Dublin
Court of Criminal Appeal	Appeals from the Circuit Court, Central Criminal Court and Special Criminal Courts Decisions are final, unless they involve a	One Supreme Court judge and two High Court judges	Criminal Courts of Justice in Dublin

Court	Criminal cases heard	Heard by	Location
	point of law of exceptional public interest		
Supreme Court	Appeals from the Court of Criminal Appeal on a point of law of exceptional public interest Appeals against High Court Orders in Judicial Review applications Cases stated from the Circuit Court (a case stated is a written statement setting out the facts of the case)	Three or, in some cases, five Supreme Court judges	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, for example, murder, sexual offences or fatal road accidents.

The Gardaí may decide to prosecute in less serious crimes. 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.

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 the previous chapter in the Charter covering the Courts Service.

Visit our website at www.dppireland.ie for more information on:

- The Role of the DPP;
- Going to Court as a Witness;
- How We Make Prosecution Decisions;
- How to Request Reasons & Reviews;
- Making a Victim Impact Statement; and
- The Criminal Justice System.

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

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 (this is when the European Union's Victims Directive came into force*);*
- review decisions not to prosecute.

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

- tell you the reason, if possible, why we decided not to prosecute. We will do this in cases where the death took place on or after 22 October 2008;
- review decisions not to prosecute.

All requests for reasons or reviews must be made in writing. You can find out how to do this by reading our information leaflet 'How to Request Reasons and Reviews' on our website.

Requests should be sent to:

Communications and Victims Liaison Unit
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
Infirmary Road
Dublin
D07 FHN8.

The Gardaí will tell you if we have decided to prosecute or not. If we are going to prosecute, the Gardaí will also tell you when and where the court case will take place and the final decision in the case.

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

A review of a decision to prosecute or not prosecute will be carried out by a lawyer who was not involved in making the original decision. There may be times when we cannot review a decision for legal reasons. If this happens in your case, we will explain this to you.

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

- treat you with respect and in a professional, non-discriminatory and impartial manner;
- 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;
- apply to the court to ask if you can use video link or other special facilities in certain circumstances when giving your evidence; and
- arrange for you to talk to the prosecution solicitor and barrister before the court case begins, if you wish. They will explain what will happen in court, but they cannot talk to you about the evidence you will give.

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. We can ask for a review of sentences from the Central Criminal Court, Circuit Criminal Court and Special Criminal Court. We cannot appeal a sentence from the District Court.

If the accused has been acquitted, we can:

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

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:

Where to contact us	
Address:	The Director of Public Prosecutions Infirmary Road Dublin D07 FHN8
Tel number:	01-858 8500
Fax:	01-642 7406

Section 7
Prison Service

Role of the Prison Service

The Prison Service manages prisons in Ireland.

Our role covers the following seven categories:

1. Prisons
2. Rehabilitation
3. Sentence remission
4. Release from prison
5. Sex offenders
6. Temporary release
7. Parole board

These seven 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 and the degree of risk. You can get more information about prisons and places of detention in Ireland in the section headed 'Your guide to prisons and places of detention' towards the end of this section.

2. Rehabilitation

To prevent prisoners from re-offending when they get released from prison, we aim to rehabilitate offenders. Rehabilitation services treat and address issues such as offending behaviour, drug and alcohol addiction, lack of education and training, anger management and self-

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

3. Sentence remission

All prisoners with a sentence to which remission applies automatically are, under law, entitled for a one quarter remission of their sentence on the basis of their good behaviour (the term remission here means a reduction in the length of a prison sentence). This is taken into account by judges when passing sentence.

In addition, all such prisoners who have taken part in authorised activity may apply to receive an enhanced remission period of greater 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 Minister for Justice and Equality following a recommendation by the Parole Board.

4. Release from prison

Offenders are usually released from prison when they complete their sentence, or when they are approved for temporary release. A life-sentenced prisoner released from prison is subject to certain conditions for life, including supervision by the Probation Service and other conditions designed to protect the public. If they breach [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 prisoner who has not been convicted may be released on bail, after an application to the courts.

5. Sex offenders

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

6. Temporary release

This allows us to re-integrate an offender 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; or
- release to help the offender re-integrate 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.

7. Parole Board*

The Board advises the Minister for Justice and Equality about long-term prison sentences. As with temporary releases, the Board takes a wide range of factors into account when it makes a recommendation. A victim, or the family of a victim who has died as a result of the crime, may make a written submission to the Parole Board. The Minister may fully or partly accept the recommendations of the Parole Board, or reject them completely.

***Please note that the Parole Act, 2019 provides for the establishment of an independent statutory Parole Board and work is underway in providing for these new arrangements.**

What you can expect from the Prison Service

Our mission – to provide safe and secure custody, dignity of care and rehabilitation to prisoners for safer communities.

Our vision – to make communities safer through excellence in a prison service built on respect for human dignity.

The Victim Liaison Service is a voluntary and strictly confidential service. If you wish to receive information **about an offender convicted for an offence against you,** we will register your name and contact details and you will be a 'registered victim' with the Irish Prison Service Victim Liaison Service.

We will:

- try to rehabilitate offenders sentenced to prison, so that other people will not become victims of their crimes;
- make sure that we will take into account possible risks to you in all cases of temporary release;
- make sure all efforts are made to prevent an offender in prison from causing further upset to victims.

Based on their request we will also tell registered victims (victims registered with our Victim Liaison Service) the following information.

We will tell you when:

- when the offender is to be released from prison, either on temporary release **or** at the end of their sentence **if** you or a member of your family have requested this information;
- if the release is ordered by the Court (We would usually do this **after** the release has happened.);
- any release or discharge conditions;
- information about other relevant developments about the prisoner's sentence **if** you request this. (These include developments such as transfers between prisons or Parole Board hearings (for prisoners sentenced to eight years or more);
- if the prisoner has escaped from custody;
- if the prisoner dies while in custody or on temporary release.

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

If you or a family member or a third party acting on your behalf would like to **register with our Victim Liaison Service** to be kept informed of significant developments in a particular prisoner's case, please contact the Prison Service Victim Liaison Officer. Contact details are given below.

As a registered victim, if you have any questions about the Irish Prison Service, you can contact the:

Victim Liaison Officer
Irish Prison Service Headquarters
IDA Business Park, Ballinalee Road
Co Longford.
Tel: (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 contact us	
Address:	Operations Directorate Irish Prison Service Headquarters IDA Business Park. Ballinalee Road Co Longford.
Tel:	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.

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 telephone
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 D07YV40 01-472 4000

Prison	Type of prison	Location and telephone
Castlerea Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for remand and sentenced prisoners in Connacht and also takes committals from counties Cavan, Donegal and Longford.	Harristown Castlerea Co. Roscommon F45X330 094-962 5213
Cloverhill Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males, which primarily caters for remand prisoners committed from the Leinster area.	Cloverhill Road Clondalkin Dublin 22 D22WC84 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 T23Y642 021-238 8000
Dóchas Centre	A closed, medium-security prison for adult females. It is the committal prison for females committed on remand or sentenced from all Courts outside the Munster area.	North Circular Road Dublin 7 D07YC97 01- 885 8987
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 V94P8N1 061-204700
Loughan House	An open, low-security prison for adult males who are regarded as requiring lower levels of security.	Open Centre Blacklion Co. Cavan F91NY76 071-983 6021

Prison	Type of prison	Location and telephone
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 R32F796 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 D07YC97 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 and prisoners accommodated here include those linked with subversive crime.	Dublin Road Portlaoise Co. Laois R32KN97 057-868 1300
Shelton Abbey	An open, low-security prison for adult males who are regarded as requiring lower levels of security.	Arklow Co. Wicklow Y14T638 0402-42300
Wheatfield Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males	Cloverhill Road Clondalkin Dublin 22 D22Y2V5 01-778 9400

Section 8
Oberstown Children Detention Campus

Role of Oberstown Children Detention Campus

Our mission – to ensure that young people detained in Oberstown Children Detention Campus are supported to move away from offending behaviour and to make a more positive contribution to society.

Our vision – to provide safe, secure and appropriate care for young people to meet their health and education needs, and to support them to address their offending behaviour and prepare them to return to their families and communities following release from detention.

What you can expect from Oberstown Children Detention Campus

The Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017, commenced in November 2017. Under this Act, Oberstown Children Detention Campus is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities as outlined in Part 2 of the Act. 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 [release] and periods of temporary leave during the Detention Order. These absences are explained below. As a victim, you may nominate a representative to be told on your behalf if you wish. Oberstown Children Detention Campus' Victim Liaison Service is strictly confidential.

Planned absences

The Children Act, 2001 as amended (the Act), 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 to support their reintegration and to meet specific needs of young people:

Section 200 – Provision of 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 or 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 for the purposes of attending a training centre, work experience, or a recreational or sporting activity.

Section 204 – Mobility trips

Section 204 absences are authorised absences from a children detention school to help the young person's reintegration into society. The young person remains 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. It does not apply during the first month of a detention order, and may be suspended if considered to be not 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 under the supervision of an identified parent or guardian, or another responsible person for the period of temporary 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 and any other specific conditions that are stated.

Section 207 – Supervision in the community

A young person may be placed out in the community under the supervision of the Probation Service, following consultation and agreement. A young person must be fully supervised by parents or guardians, and they must attend school or a training programme. The placing out in the community may be cancelled if there are concerns about child welfare and protection, or 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.

If we do not meet your expectations

As a registered victim, 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.

Where to contact us	
Address:	Victim Liaison Officer Oberstown Children Detention Campus Lusk Co Dublin K45 AY66
Tel:	01-852 6445
Email:	vlo@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 contact us	
Address:	Director Oberstown Children Detention Campus Lusk Co Dublin K45 AY66
Tel:	01-852 6400
Email:	info@oberstown.com

Section 9
National Forensic Mental Health Service

Role of the National Forensic Mental Health Service

The National Forensic Mental Health Service (the NFMHS), based at the Central Mental Hospital, Dublin, is a national service and is part of the HSE's Mental Health Service.

We provide mental health services for patients who have been referred to a designated centre [a hospital or other in-patient facility for the care and treatment of people suffering from mental illness or mental disorder] when the courts have decided that they are unfit to stand trial or have been found 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 on page 55.

Through our in-reach teams into the prisons around the country, the NFMHS provides mental health assessment and treatment to prisoners who may be suffering from a mental disorder. We can also provide inpatient mental health treatment to those prisoners who need it at our secure inpatient mental health facility, the Central Mental Hospital.

We aim to deliver individualised care programmes to each patient, based on their rehabilitation needs. This means that every patient has access to a range of mental health professionals including nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists who work with the patient.

This is done to ensure the best possible care is provided to patients in order to foster their recovery. Each patient has a Multi-Disciplinary Team whose ultimate goal is to maximise recovery for the patients under their care. This is done by treating, supporting and supervising individuals in the least restrictive

environment that is appropriate to their needs, while also being mindful of victims and the wider community.

Definitions:

Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGRI) – A special verdict:
This is where an accused person is tried for an offence and, following evidence presented from a psychiatrist, the jury finds that the person who committed the offence was suffering from a mental illness at the time and, as a result of their mental illness:

- they did not know the nature and quality of the offence, and/or
- they did not know what they were doing was wrong, and/or
- they were unable to refrain from (stop) committing the offence.

In these cases, a special verdict of Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity will be returned. A person found NGRI may be detained in a designated centre (such as the Central Mental Hospital) until the Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board decides that they should be released.

Fitness to be Tried:
If an accused person is suffering from a mental illness and, because of that mental illness, they are unable to understand the proceedings of the Court and or are 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.

Prisoners who have mental health problems may also be transferred to a designated centre (such as the Central Mental Hospital) for inpatient treatment. These patients can be returned to prison by the hospital or by the Mental Health Review Board.

In the NFMHS, we operate a programme of staged temporary releases or ‘leaves’ from the designated centre for patients who have been risk-assessed

by their treating Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) and considered to be suitable for such leave.

This process of leave granting is overseen by the Clinical Director of the NFMHS and the Department of Justice and Equality. The different kinds of leaves are explained below:

Leave (Temporary Release) from the designated centre for patients can be staged as follows:

- **Level 1 Leave:** This is leave outside the hospital, accompanied by NFMHS staff, granted on a case-by-case basis. This would be used in the early stages of rehabilitation or in exceptional circumstances, for example, to attend funerals, and so on.

- **Level 2 Leave:** This is day leave, accompanied by NFMHS staff that is part of a programme of progressive rehabilitation planned and overseen by the patient's MDT. Normally this leave is for a few hours at a time.

- **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 accompanied day leave (Level 2) over a sufficient period in the past and has shown they are reliable.

- This would normally be used to attend training courses or work in the Dublin area. This leave is evaluated by the patient's MDT on a continuous basis to ensure that it is used appropriately.

- **Level 4 Leave:** This is overnight leave on a case-by-case basis. This should not normally be granted unless the patient has had unaccompanied day leave (Level 3) over a sufficient period in the past and has shown they are reliable.

- **Level 5 Leave:** This is overnight leave as part of a programme of progressive rehabilitation. This would not normally be granted unless overnight leave on a case-by-case basis has been granted in the past, and unless the patient has had unaccompanied day leave over a sufficient period in the past and has shown they are reliable following assessment by their MDT.

  The NFMHS also has community-based Forensic Rehabilitation and Recovery (FR&R), consultant-led multi-disciplinary teams to support and supervise patients who, following their inpatient stay, are living in supported housing while on the highest level of leave.

  Such support is also in place for those patients who are conditionally discharged and who live outside the designated centre. This is subject to them following the terms of their conditional discharge.

What you can expect from the National Forensic Mental Health Service

If you wish to receive information about the patient who is detained in a designated centre (under Section 4 or 5 of the Criminal Law (Insanity) Act 2006) in relation to an offence against you, we will register your name and contact details. You will then be a 'registered victim' with the National Forensic Mental Health Service.

We will respond in a timely and respectful manner to your queries.

We will:

- be professional and courteous and give you the right information in a timely manner;
- be open and honest at all times, and answer your questions as fully as we can;
- protect your privacy and keep accurate records of your dealings with us, and keep those records safe; and

- be accessible and available to answer your questions in person, by telephone, by letter or electronically.

If you are a registered victim, we can:

- tell you when the patient is to be released from hospital, either on a temporary leave basis, on discharge subject to conditions, or unconditionally discharged;
- explain the different pathways for patients in general terms through the National Forensic Mental Health Service, the treatments and therapies that are offered to patients throughout their recovery journey;
- tell you of any recall of the patient who was on temporary leave from hospital, or who was on a Conditional Discharge;
- tell you of the general conditions that underpin any permission for leave or discharge, and in particular any conditions which relate specifically to you, the victim;
- tell you about other relevant developments regarding the patient, if you request this, such as transfers to another hospital, to court, to prison, and so on;
- tell you if the patient escapes;
- tell you if the patient dies while detained in hospital or while on leave.

It is important to note that we cannot disclose (share) specific medical or clinical information about the patient.

We may invite you (if we have consent from all parties) to take part in a restorative justice process. This is a process that seeks to resolve matters arising from the offence for patients, their families and victims. If this is appropriate and if you choose to take part, we will explain the process and support you through each step.

If you are a victim and wish to register with us, please email us at vlo.nfmhs@hse.ie stating your name, contact details and the patient about whom you wish to obtain information.

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 vlo.nfmhs@hse.ie or use our website at www.hse.ie/eng/national-forensic-mental-health-service-portrane/

Section 10
Probation Service

Role of the Probation Service

The Probation Service is an agency within the Department of Justice and Equality. It works to reduce crime levels in order to have safer communities and 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, as well as in prisons and detention centres, with the goal of supporting them to 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 with other criminal justice agencies;
- put in place programmes which aim to reduce offending;
- work with other community-based organisations who seek to reduce offending;
- work with offenders in prison, including those serving life sentences, to support safe re-integration into the community; and
- respond to requests from victims and victim support organisations.

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

Probation Order – the court places an offender under the supervision of a probation officer for up to three years. The probation order may contain conditions to prevent the person from repeating the same offence or committing other offences.

These conditions may include 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 during Deferment of Penalty – a court may decide to defer (that is, 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 be required to remain under the supervision of the Probation Service.

Suspended Sentence Supervision – this is where the court suspends some or all of the final part of a prison sentence. The court may place the person under the supervision of the Probation Service with a view to reducing the risk of re-offending. The court may set conditions to support the supervision.

Post-Release Supervision – the court may include in the sentence of a sex offender 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 a number of community sanctions that are managed by the young person's probation team of the Probation Service working with young offenders and their families.

These include family conferences and probation orders that have specific conditions in relation to education, training, use of leisure and working with identified community mentors.

In our work with offenders, we**:**

- take account of victim concerns when we prepare reports on offenders for the courts;
- strongly encourage offenders to take responsibility for the hurt, damage and suffering which they may have caused you;
- explore ways in which offenders can make good the harm they have caused;
- make sure that offenders continue to address any lifestyle issue or attitude that has contributed to their offences against you; and
- make sure that any community-based programmes are sensitive to your concerns and aim to prevent re-offending.

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 manner to your queries.

We will explain the meaning of the different orders (outlined above) which we operate on behalf of the court. We will do this by phone, in writing or we'll meet with you, depending on the circumstances.

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

Restorative justice is when a voluntary meeting can take place between a victim, an offender and an independent person skilled at managing such meetings.

At the meeting, the victim can tell their 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 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.

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.

You can request that we explore whether restorative justice is possible in your case, or 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.

You can contact this Unit at telephone numbers:
01- 817 6511, 01-817 3684 or 01-817 3600.
You can contact us by email on restorative@probation.ie

Victim Service Officers are also available in different regions to respond to your queries. You can contact them at the following numbers:

- Limerick, Clare, Cork and Kerry: 021-483 6700

- Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Roscommon, Longford, Westmeath, Cavan, Leitrim, Monaghan: 094-9028404

- Dublin City and County, Meath, Louth, Wicklow: 01-817 3600

- Wexford, Waterford, Tipperary, Kilkenny, Carlow, Laois, Offaly, Kildare: 051-872548

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 at the following details:

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

Section 11
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 and representation by a solicitor or barrister in court.

Criminal legal aid and civil legal aid are separate services.

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 which can be granted by the Courts. 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.

It is the Legal Aid Board which provides civil legal aid in matters dealt with in the civil courts including mainly in the area 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 about the law 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. **There are special arrangements for helping victims in rape and other serious sexual assaults whose cases are going to court, and also special arrangements for 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 contacting our head office at the following address:

Legal Aid Board
Head Office
Quay Street
Cahirciveen
Co. Kerry
V23 RD36
Tel: 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; and
- 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 assault whose cases are going to court.

Representation

A legal aid representation service can be also provided 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 with the court by the legal team of the accused.

Also during a rape or other serious sexual assault case, legal representation can be provided for you in cases where the accused applies to have your previous counselling records considered as part of the case

These services are free of charge for all victims.

Advice about human trafficking potential victims

We also provide an advice service for 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), or leave to remain in Ireland;
- seeking information on employment protection legislation, for example, this might be information on the legally allowed maximum working hours or the legally required minimum break periods at work
- seeking compensation from perpetrators of trafficking and/or from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal;
- information on voluntarily returning home; and
- what is involved if you are called as a witness in a criminal trial.

This service is free of charge for all potential victims of human trafficking.

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 and online through our website; and you can apply to the District Court for a number of orders (listed below).

Board staff can help you with your application, and provide you with a solicitor to represent you at the Court hearing. You will not have to pay a contribution if you are seeking legal aid for either of the following:

- taking or defending an application in the District Court for a barring order, safety order, interim barring order, or protection order; and
- defending an application by Tusla (the Child and Family Agency) to take your children into foster care or to 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.

Overall, further information on obtaining legal aid from the Legal Aid Board is available on the Board's website at www.legalaidboard.ie

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 us	
Address:	Complaints Officer Legal Aid Board 48-49 North Brunswick Street, Georges' Lane, Dublin D07 PE0C
Tel:	01- 646 9600 Lo-call: 1890 615200
Fax:	01-662 3661
Website:	www.legalaidboard.ie

Section 12
Coroner

Role of the Coroner

In Ireland the coroner is required by law to inquire into the cause of a range of reportable deaths, including unexpected, unexplained, violent or unnatural deaths.

This inquiry is an independent inquiry to determine the cause of death of the person and to 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 if this is required.

The coroner's inquest is an important public service, particularly for the family and friends of the person who has died.

The Coroners (Amendment) Act, 2019 sets out a more extensive range of deaths requiring investigation and inquest on a mandatory basis. This includes deaths in State custody or detention, a maternal death or late maternal death.

In cases of stillbirth at 24 weeks' pregnant or more, **or** an infant death (up to 365 days after birth), the death must be reported to the coroner. There is no automatic requirement for a post-mortem examination or inquest, however, 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 facts about the death;
- place those facts on the public record; and

- make findings on the following:
    - 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 makes findings on all of these questions, as far as possible, and returns a verdict.

Under the Coroners Act 1962, neither the coroner or a jury – if one is used to reach a verdict which may hold a person liable for the death of the deceased, or whether the death was a crime, or whether a person bears a civil liability arising from the death**.** Such matters of criminal or civil liability are for the courts to decide.

However, the inquest can make general recommendations that the coroner or jury considers necessary or desirable in the interests of public health or safety, or that are designed to help prevent deaths occurring.

The coroner is independent in carrying out their statutory functions. There is no appeal from a 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

A coroner is an independent 'quasi-judicial' officer who is responsible, in the public interest, for investigating reportable deaths. (A quasi-judicial officer is a person who has some legal powers, but does not have the full powers of the Courts.)

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

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 death, which, in the circumstances is an unexpected, unexplained or violent one.

Family Member

The term '**family member**' in relation to the work of the coroner, is broadly defined to include the following people:

a) a parent, grandparent, child, brother, sister, nephew, niece, uncle or aunt, whether of the whole blood, of the half blood or by affinity, of the person;

b) a spouse, a civil partner within the meaning of the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010 or a cohabiting partner of the person,

c) any other person who is ordinarily a member of the person's household, or

d) 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 such member of the person's family who is adopted.

The coroner's work involves:

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

Each of these are explained below.

Identification

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

Post-mortem examinations

The coroner may be of the opinion, that such an examination is necessary or may be required by law, to direct a post-mortem examination to be carried out by a pathologist (a specialist medical doctor). This is a special medical examination of the body. Coroners are aware of the concerns that family of the deceased may have about this procedure, and will inform and explain the reasons involved.

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

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 provision if the coroner considers that

providing the report could have an unfair influence on any criminal proceedings in relation to the death.

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 look to hold an inquest as soon as possible after the death. This process can take some time to ensure that all necessary medical and technical reports are available and the attendance of critical witnesses can be arranged. An inquest is a public inquiry into the death, including an unexpected, unexplained or violent death.

Where a death is under investigation by An Garda Síochána, the Garda Síochána Ombudsman, the Defence Forces, or a body authorised in law to investigate certain types of accidents, the inquest may be opened. This inquest will hear basic information as to identity and then be adjourned pending 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 documents, where such have been disclosed (shared) at the inquest. You can get these from the coroner's office for a set fee.

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 telephone numbers of coroners from your local authority or from our website: www.coroners.ie

If you have any concerns or questions about the conduct of an inquiry into a death reported to a coroner, including a post-mortem examination or an inquest, you should directly engage 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 and Equality. The contact details are below.

How to contact us	
Address:	Coroner Service Implementation Team Department of Justice and Equality Athlumney House IDA Business Park Johnstown, Navan Co Meath
Tel:	046-909 1323

How to contact us	
Fax:	046-905 0560
Email:	csitmail@justice.ie

Section 13
Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal

Role of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal runs the general compensation scheme for personal injuries that you may have suffered 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 and Equality appoints the members of the Tribunal. The Tribunal is made up of seven members (a Chairperson and six other members). The Chairperson and each member are trained in law. The Tribunal members make the decisions about applications independently. This means neither the Minister nor anyone else has a say in the matter.

The compensation scheme for personal injuries that you may have suffered due to a violent crime allows you to apply for payment for:

- expenses you incur, and
- losses that you may suffer

as a direct result of a violent crime, **or** in trying to prevent a crime or in saving someone's life.

The scheme also provides for the family 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.

How it works:

- A member of the Tribunal normally decides on each compensation case.

- If you are unhappy with the decision, you can appeal it. At the appeal stage you will attend a hearing with three members of the Tribunal. The member who made the original decision will not be one of these three.

- We will hold the appeal hearing in private and in an informal manner – you will not need legal representation.

- Usually compensation will be paid in a single payment. However, in certain cases, depending on the circumstances of the case, the Tribunal may make an initial payment and delay the final award until it becomes clearer what the long-term effect of an injury is likely to be.

The EU Directive on Compensation to Crime Victims[2] provides for co-operation between EU member states, so that victims can get compensation for crimes committed in another Member State. We process claims from other Member States and we 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 and 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

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

through the Director of Public Prosecutions.

When making an award, the Tribunal has to ensure 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 that no award should be made or that the award should be reduced by a certain amount. They may also decide that where the Tribunal has already paid money to an applicant, the applicant should repay it.

Time limits for applying

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.

Reporting the incident to An Garda Siochána – report needed for the Tribunal

To qualify for compensation, the incident must have been reported to An Garda Síochána without delay and applicants must co-operate with An Garda Síochána.

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

In considering applications, 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 5 to 16 of the scheme (inclusive). Before applying for compensation, applicants should

review the terms and conditions of the scheme. These are available on the Department of Justice and Equality website at www.justice.ie

Cash Limited Grant Scheme
The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme is a cash-limited grant scheme. This means that the Tribunal can't pay out more funds in any one year than has been voted by the Dáil. So, if the Tribunal's annual funding is used up before the end of a financial year (at 31 December) it generally has to wait until the next financial year before making any further payments to applicants.

What you can expect from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal

You can apply to the Tribunal for ex gratia compensation (that is compensation made without any legal obligation) for a personal injury where the injury is:

1. directly due to a crime of violence, or
2. due to circumstances arising from action in assisting or attempting to assist the prevention of crime or the saving of human life.

If you wish, we will work with a victim support organisation that is acting for 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; and
- tell you of your right to appeal a decision of the Tribunal.

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 will:

- advise you about making a claim, or you can apply directly through the European Commission's website http://ec.europa.eu/

(see section on 'Compensation' for crime victims);

- get an application form for you;
- translate the application form and your answers if the Member State does not accept applications in English or Irish; and
- receive correspondence on your claim from the other Member State, if you wish, and pass it on to you.

If we do not meet your expectations

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

If the administrative staffing service of the Tribunal does not meet your expectations and you would like to ask questions, make suggestions or make a complaint about the service, you can contact customer service in the Department of Justice & Equality at info@justice.ie

If the work of the Tribunal does not meet your expectations, the Tribunal can be contacted as below:

How to contact us	
Address:	The Chairperson Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal Second Floor 7-11 Montague Court Montague Street Dublin 2 D02 FT96
Email:	Email: criminalinjuries@justice.ie
Website:	Website: www.justice.ie (see the 'What We Do' tab and then 'Other Regulatory Functions' section, which contains the application form and scheme details).

Section 14
Department of Foreign Affairs And Trade

(Supports for Irish victims of crime abroad and for their families)

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

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

Role of Consular Assistance in supporting victims of crime

Staff in the **Consular Assistance Unit in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade** and in our Embassies and Consulates overseas, receive specialist training. They are also 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, will maintain contact with victims of crime abroad, and their families, and will provide advice and support.

Where appropriate, they will also provide details of specialist services in Ireland, such as those arranged by Advic and Support after Homicide victim support services. Advic and Support after Homicide are both very well established national organisations who provide confidential support to people whose lives have been affected by homicide.

Advic 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.

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

Where an Irish citizen has died abroad the Consular Assistance Unit can also, where required, provide information of repatriation services (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 you can expect from our Embassy/Consular Assistance Services

If you are a victim of a violent or traumatic crime abroad, we will work with our Embassies and Consulates to:

- respond quickly to your call and offer support and advice in a sensitive, compassionate manner;
- offer language and cultural advice and support;
- offer advice about how local authorities work in the relevant country and who to contact;
- direct you to local supports, where appropriate, in the relevant country;
- provide a list of local English-speaking lawyers;
- help you in dealing with the local police;
- contact your family or friends on your behalf, if you would like us to do so;
- safeguard your information in full compliance with Ireland's Data Protection Acts;

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

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

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

If you are the victim of a stolen passport, we will:

- help you to get an Emergency Travel Document, assisting you to return home.

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

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

The Unit does not have a budget for medical, legal or other expenses.

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. During office hours, our number is +353 (0)1 408 2527. In case of an emergency, the out-of-hours number is +353 (0)1 408 2000.

We also offer worldwide assistance through our embassies and consulates. For all embassy contact details, download our free **TravelWise smartphone app**, available in the **App Store** or Google Play.

We also provide clear, reliable and up-to-date **travel advice** for over 200 countries worldwide. This information is available on our website, on the TravelWise app and on Twitter @dfatravelwise.

If we do not meet your expectations

If we do not meet your expectations and you would like to ask a question, or make a suggestion or a complaint about our consular assistance service, you can contact us.

How to contact us	
Address:	Consular Assistance Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 76-78, Harcourt Street Dublin 2 D02DX45
Tel:	During office hours: +353 (0)1 408 2527 Outside office hours: +353 (0)1 408 2000.
Email:	ConsularAssistance@dfa.ie
Website:	www.dfa.ie/travel/assistance-abroad/

Section 15
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 and brought major changes to the way victims of crime must be treated in Europe. The rights in the Victims' Rights Directive apply to all people who fall victim to crime in Europe regardless of their nationality.

The Directive contains a set of binding, enforceable rights for victims. EU Member States, including Ireland, must ensure these rights 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 which is the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act, 2017.

Under the Act, a victim means a person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss, which was directly caused by an offence. This includes the family of a person whose death was caused by an offence.

The Act sets out the legal rights of victims in detail. Some examples of these rights are:

- The right to clear and understandable information on the criminal justice system and their role within it
- The right to information about the services and entitlements they can access

- The right to a written acknowledgement of their complaint
- The right to information about the progress of the investigation and any court proceedings
- The right to be informed of a decision not to prosecute the offence committed against them and the right to ask for a review of that decision
- The right to information about the release, temporary release, or escape of a person serving a prison sentence for an offence against the victim
- The right to interpretation and translation where needed to help them understand and be understood during the criminal justice process
- The right to have their individual needs assessed so that any specific protections or supports they need can be considered

The needs of victims can be very different. The Victims of Crime Act focuses on the needs of victims as individuals. The **full list of rights** are set out in the Act and can be found at www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2017/act/28/enacted/en/pdf

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 – that is, 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**.

Nevertheless, as well as the Victims of Crime Act, there are other parts of the law that apply directly to victims. Particular issues which are relevant to victims are outlined in the following sections. This outline follows the course of a case. That is:

1. The investigation stage;
2. A possible charge and bail, if granted;
3. The court hearing; and
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, or any person who is helping An Garda Síochána with an investigation. You should tell the Garda Síochána if this is happening to you.

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 that they don't have to give their account of events again in the courtroom on the day of the trial.

However, they do have to be available on the day 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 and so can't see the accused person and the accused person can't see them.

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

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. Therefore, the accused person can get bail, except in certain cases, for example:

- where there is a risk that the accused person will interfere with witnesses, including the victim;
- where there is a risk that the accused person will not turn up for trial; or
- where the person is accused of a serious offence and where there is a risk that the person 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.

If the person does not get bail, they are sent to prison. This person can re-apply for bail if their trial does not begin within four months of the first refusal of bail.

If the person gets bail, they must not commit any offences while on bail, and must 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 or to have contact with certain people, including contact by the accused with 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 the 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 in cases where the Garda considers an arrest to be necessary to prevent harm to, interference with, or intimidation of:

- the victim of the alleged offence,
- a witness to the alleged offence, or
- any person with whom the person on bail is not permitted 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 the bail, they may be arrested and brought to court, if the court orders it. The court may then send the person to prison until the trial.

3. Court hearing

Live television link evidence

A person under 18 years of age may give evidence to the court through a live television link in cases involving a violent or sexual offence, or human trafficking, unless the court has a good reason not to allow television link evidence. If the court allows it, any other person may give evidence through a live television link in cases involving violent, sexual or human trafficking offences.

For other offences, a victim may give evidence through a live television link to the court if the court allows it. 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.

Where a person under 18 years of age gives evidence by live television link in the District Court in cases involving violent, sexual or human trafficking offences, the court may allow a video recording of that evidence to be used in later court hearings.

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.**

In addition, if during a rape or other serious sexual assault case, the accused applies to the court to raise issues about your prior sexual experience, the Legal Aid Board can provide legal advice and representation to you to defend that application.

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 of charge to you. (For more information see the Legal Aid Board section in Charter at section 11.)

4. Conviction

Victim impact report and statements

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.

In cases 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.

A court must take into account any impact that the crime has on the victim when deciding the sentence for any crime. The court may get this evidence through a report.

The court can ask a professional person, such as 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.**

More information on Victim Impact Statements is provided in the following booklet prepared by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. See link at www.dppireland.ie/app/uploads/2019/03/ENG_Making_a_Victim_Impact_Statement_Sept_2018.pdf

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. A parent, relation or friend can accompany the victim in 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. See link at www.rcni.ie/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-the-Legal-Process-for-Survivors-of-Sexual-Violence-2nd-Edition-3.pdf

Domestic violence

Domestic violence is the physical, emotional, sexual or mental abuse of one person by another within a close, intimate or family relationship. Domestic violence can affect a diverse range of victims and perpetrators, including spouses, children, parents or partners.

Court orders

The civil courts can grant a wide range of orders in cases involving domestic violence. These include the following types of orders:

A safety order

This orders a named person not to use or threaten violence, molest or make fearful the person who has applied for the order or any other dependent persons, 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 the home of the 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, and not to 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, Twitter feeds, email, and so on).

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. It is granted if there is immediate risk of major harm to the person applying for the order, or to dependent persons, including children. The order can be granted without the person named in the order being present in the court (referred to as ‘ex parte’) or without notice being given to that person.

A protection order

This is like a safety order, except that it takes effect immediately and 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 if, for example, 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.

More information on the above orders and who can apply for them is provided in the following guide prepared by Women's Aid at:

www.womensaid.ie/download/pdf/womens_aid_guide_on_the_domestic_violence_act_2018.pdf

A breach of a domestic violence order is a criminal offence. If a court gives a safety order, a barring order, an interim barring order, an emergency barring order, or a protection order against a person, and that person does not obey the order, they have committed a criminal offence.

If a court gives a barring order, an interim barring order, or an emergency barring order about a particular place, and the person named in the order does not let the person who got the order, or any dependent child, into the place, or tries to prevent from them getting in, they have committed a criminal offence.

Any person who commits one of these offences can be prosecuted in court. If they are found guilty, they can be fined and or sent to prison. 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 and/or sent to prison.

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 take into account the condition of the vehicle, the place, the amount of actual traffic and the level of traffic that might be expected.

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

Harassment: the crime of harassment involves a person being persistently followed, watched, pestered or subjected to communications without lawful authority or reasonable excuse.

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 any person 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 some person and kills the 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 is out of control because they have been provoked or mistakenly thinks that it is necessary for self-defence.

Sexual offences including rape: Rape means having sex 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;
- if they don't understand what they are doing;
- if they are asleep or too drunk to make a decision; or
- if they 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, which was made worse because of violence, threats, humiliating the victim or causing them injury.

Theft: a theft is where a person takes property without the permission of its owner and with the intention of never returning it. (A robbery is where a person uses or threatens to use force while carrying out a theft.)

The National Adult Literacy Agency also has a useful book explaining legal terms. A plain English guide to legal terms.

Section 16
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 continue to play a vital role in helping crime victims by providing support services directly to victims and their families and friends. These services also help people to understand, and to be able 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.

Alternatively, you can contact the National Crime Victims Helpline at Freephone 116 006, **Text: 085-133 7711 or e-mail to** info@crimevictimshelpline.ie for more information.

Table 1- Victim Support Service Organisations *

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address
Adapt Domestic Abuse Services (Limerick)	Domestic Violence Support	1800 200 504	www.adaptservices.ie
AdVIC	Support to families of Homicide victims	1800 852 000	www.advic.ie
Anyman	Domestic violence (support to male victims)	01-554 3811	www.anyman.ie
Aoibhneas	Domestic Violence Support	01- 867 0701	www.aoibhneas.ie/
Ascend	Domestic Violence Support	0505-23379	www.ntdc.ie
Barnardos	Support to child victims of crime	01-453 0355	www.barnardos.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address
Beacon of Light Counselling Centre	Counselling service to victims of crime	01-457 8700	www.beaconoflight.ie
Bray Women's Refuge	Domestic Violence Support	01-286 6163	www.braywomensrefuge.com
CARI	Support to **child** victims of crime	1890 924 567	www.cari.ie
Carlow Women's Aid	Domestic Violence Support	1800 444 944	www.carlowwomensaid.ie
Clare Haven Services	Domestic Violence Support	065-682 2435	www.clarehaven.ie
Cope Galway Waterside House	Domestic Violence Support	091-778750	www.copegalway.ie
Cuan Saor Women's Refuge Ltd.	Domestic Violence Support	1800 57 67 57	www.cuansaor.org
Dignity 4 Patients	Services to patients who are victims of crime	041–984 3730	www.dignity4patients.org/
Domestic Violence Advocacy Centre (Sligo)	Domestic Violence Support	071-914 1515	www.domesticviolence.ie
Domestic Violence Response Galway	Domestic Violence Support	091-866740	www.domesticviolenceresponse.com
Donegal Women's Domestic Violence Services	Domestic Violence Support	1800 262 677	www.donegaldomesticvoilenceservices.ie
Drogheda Women's Refuge and Children's Refuge Centre	Domestic Violence Support	041-984 4550	www.droghedarefuge.org
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre	Support Service to victims of sexual violence	National 24-Hour Helpline 1800 778 888	www.drcc.ie
Dundalk Counselling Service	Counselling service to victims of crime	042-933 8333	www.dundalkcounsellingcentre.ie
Esker House Women's Refuge	Domestic Violence Support	090-647 4122	www.eskerhouse.ie
Federation for Victim Assistance	National Support Service to victims of crime	1800 277 477	www.victimassistance.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address
Greystones Family Resource Centre	Domestic Violence Support	01-255 7528	www.greystonesfrc.ie
Hope Trust	Counselling services	085 114 0983	www.hopetrust.ie
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	www.itas.ie
Kerry Women's Refuge and Support Services	Domestic Violence Support	066 712 9100	www.kerryrefuge.com
Kilkenny Women's Refuge Ltd (Amber)	Domestic Violence Support	1850 42 42 44	www.kilkennywomensrefuge.ie
Laois Domestic Abuse Service	Domestic Violence Support	057 867 1100	www.laoisdomesticabuseservice.ie
Le Chéile	Restorative Justice service	01-214 4350	www.lecheile.ie
Letterkenny Women's Centre (Counselling)	Counselling services	074-912 4985	www.donegalwomenscentre.ie/
Living Life Voluntary Counselling Centre	Counselling services	01-286 6729	www.livinglifecounselling.com
Longford Women's Link	Domestic Violence Support	043-334 1511	http://www.lwl.ie/
Mayo Women's Support Services	Domestic Violence Support	094-902 5409	www.mwss.ie
Meath Women's Refuge	Domestic Violence Support	046-902 2393	https://www.facebook.com/meathwomensrefugeandsupportservices/
Mens Development Network (MEND - Men Ending Domestic Abuse)	Domestic violence support Waterford, Wexford, South Tipperary and Carlow/Kilkenny, Laois/Offaly and Kildare.	051-878866	www.mend.ie
Missing in Ireland Support Services	Support services to relatives and friends of missing persons	1890 442 552	www.missingpersons.ie
Mná Feasa Domestic Violence Project	Domestic Violence Support	021-421 1757	www.mnafeasa.com

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address
MOVE Ireland **(Men overcoming violence)**	Domestic Voilence Suppport programmes currently run in Athlone, Cork Dublin (Swords, Tallaght and City Central), Galway, Kerry, Limerick/ Clare, Meath, North Tipperary and Sligo	065-6848689	www.moveireland.ie
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)	042-9359755	N/A
Oasis House Women's Refuge Waterford	Domestic Violence Support	1890 264 364	www.waterforddirectoryofservices.ie/directory/oasis-house-womens-refuge-2/ oasishouse2@eircom.net
Offaly Domestic Violence Support Service	Domestic Violence Support	057-935 1886	www.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
Rape Crisis Network Ireland	Representative body and Support Service to victims of sexual violence	01-865 6954	www.rcni.ie
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

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address
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
SAFE Ireland	National Social Change Agency - Domestic Violence Support	090-647 9078	www.safeireland.ie
Saoirse Housing Association	Domestic Violence Support	01-463 0000	www.saoirsewomensrefuge.ie
Sexual Violence Centre Cork	Support Service to victims of sexual violence	1800 496 496	www.sexualviolence.ie
Sonas Dublin	Domestic Violence Support	087-952 5217	www.domesticabuse.ie
Support After Crime *(predominantly Munster area served)*	Support to victims of crime	021-432 0555	www.supportaftercrimeservices.ie
Support After Homicide	Support to families of Homicide victims	087-983 7322	www.supportafterhomicide.ie
Teach Tearmainn Kildare	Domestic Violence Support	045-535178	www.teachtearmainn.ie
Tearmann Domestic Abuse Services for Cavan and Monaghan	Domestic Violence Support	047-72311	www.tearmann.net
Victim Support at Court	Specialist court support service to victims of crime	01 -872 6785	www.vsac.ie
West Cork Women's Project	Domestic Violence Support	1800 203 136	www.westcorkwomensproject.ie
Westmeath Support Service against Domestic Abuse	Domestic Violence Support	044 -933 3868	www.westmeathsupport.ie

Victim support services	Type of organisation	Phone number	Website address
Wexford Women's Refuge	Domestic Violence Support	1800 220 444	https://www.facebook.com/wexfordwomensrefuge/ wexrefuge@eircom.net
Women's Aid	Domestic Violence Support	24hr national helpline 1800 341 900	www.womensaid.ie
Women's Aid Dundalk	Domestic Violence Support	042 -933 3244	www.womensaiddundalk.net
You Are Not Alone (YANA)	Domestic Violence Support	022- 53915	www.yana.ie

*****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), which are run by the HSE, are safe places that 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 on page 106.)

The contact details for each of the six units are given below and they 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 such crime in a respectful, person-centred, non-judgmental way.

1. Cork Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Service available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Treatment Unit is located in South Infirmary / Victoria University Hospital, Cork. T12 X23H

Monday – Friday, 0830 - 1630 contact number for the Unit 021- 4926 297/ 021- 492 6100 Bleep 789

Out of hours or weekends contact Nursing Admin 021- 4926100

2. Donegal Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Treatment and care available 24 hours a day 365 days a year.
To speak with a Forensic Clinical Examiner to arrange a private appointment please contact 24-hour On-call SATU mobile: 087-0681964

Office phone during weekdays: 074 -9104436

3. Dublin Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Service available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Located in Rotunda Hospital, Dublin 1.
For advice or to book an appointment at the sexual assault treatment unit at the Rotunda Hospital you can ring 01- 817 1736 on Mon- Fri 08.00 - 16.00

Out of hours contact Rotunda Hospital 01-817 1700 and ask for SATU.

4. Galway Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Service available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Located in a dedicated building near Galway racecourse.
For advice or to book an appointment, contact your local Garda Station or ring the unit 091 -765751 or 087 -633 8118 on Mon to Fri 08.00 - 16.00.

For out of hours help, contact your local Garda station.

5. Mullingar Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Service available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Located in Midland Regional Hospital, Mullingar N91 NA43.

For advice or to book an appointment, contact the Gardaí or ring the unit at 044 – 939 4239 or 086-040 9952 on Mon - Fri 08.00 – 17.30.

For out of hours or weekend help, contact your local Garda Station or call nursing administration through the hospital switchboard on 044 - 934 0221.

6. Waterford Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Service available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Located in Waterford Regional Hospital.

For advice or to book an appointment, contact the SATU directly on 051- 84 2157.

For out of hours help, contact the nurse on call through the hospital switchboard on 051- 84 8000.

Sexual Assault Services available in the Midwest area

The Mid-West Forensic Medical Examination Service (FME) was established in 2006 and 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.

The service is located in Mid-western Regional Hospital Limerick Outpatients Department.

This service operates from Monday to Friday 6pm to 8am, and 24 hours over weekends and Public Holidays, with on-call commitment being provided by six Forensic Clinical Examiners (General Practitioners) through Shannondoc.

Contact SHANNONDOC Tel: 1850 212 999
During office hours, contact Galway SATU or Cork SATU. Contact details above.