Victims' rights - by country

Irland

You will be considered a victim of crime if you have suffered damage, e.g. you have been injured or your property has been damaged or stolen, etc., as a result of an incident that constitutes a crime according to national law. As a victim of crime, the law grants you certain individual rights before, during and after court proceedings (trial).

Criminal proceedings in Ireland consist of an investigation and trial. The police authorities in Ireland are known as 'An Garda Síochána' or 'Gardaí' for short. An Garda Síochána investigates the case. After the investigation, a decision whether or not to prosecute is made. For serious crimes, An Garda Síochána sends the file to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and the DPP makes the decision to proceed. For less serious crimes, An Garda Síochána may make the decision to proceed. The decision to prosecute is based on public interest – whether the evidence gathered in the case would be likely to secure a conviction in the circumstances. If there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a conviction is likely, the offender will then be prosecuted.

The following factsheets will take you through the different steps of the procedure, describing your rights during the investigation of the crime, during the trial or after the first trial. Also, read more about the help and support you can get.

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(OLD)1 - My rights during the investigation of a crime

How and where can I report a crime?

You can **report** a crime by calling into, writing to or phoning the local Garda Station. You can also approach a member of An Garda Síochána who is on duty (on the street, in a police station, etc.). Contact details for your local Garda station can be found in the telephone book or on the online Garda Síochána Station Directory. You can dial 999 or 112 from anywhere in the country in the case of an emergency.

You should report the crime yourself as outlined above. However, if you have been incapacitated, someone else can report the crime on your behalf. If you would prefer to report the crime anonymously, you can phone An Garda Síochána's confidential line on 1800 666 111. However, depending on the nature of the crime this may not be suitable in the circumstances.

In general there are no time limits for reporting a crime. For less serious offences (i.e. cases heard by the District Court with no jury and carrying a maximum prison sentence of 12 months for one offence) you have to make the report within six months from the date of offence to the instigation of criminal proceedings.

There is no special form required by authorities for the report. You can make your report through English. If you are not fluent in English, you can request an interpreter, which An Garda Síochána will provide free of charge.

When you report a crime, An Garda Síochána will take a written statement from you. You will be asked to supply:

your name, address and contact details;

a description of the incident (including location, date, time and a short narrative description of the crime) and

details of property missing or damaged, if applicable.

details of any physical injury.

An Garda Síochána will gather the evidence and investigate your report.

How can I follow up on what the authorities do after I report a crime?

When you report a crime, An Garda Síochána will provide you with details of the name, rank, phone number and station of the investigating Garda. You will also be given an incident reference number. You can use the reference number to follow up on your complaint. If you are the family of a victim of murder or unlawful killing, you will be assigned a Garda Liaison Officer, who will liaise with you throughout the case.

How can I be involved in the investigation of the crime?

In general, your only involvement will be to make a statement detailing everything you know about the crime. It is the responsibility of An Garda Síochána to gather the evidence and investigate the crime and keep you informed of any developments. Depending on the nature of your case, An Garda Síochána may ask you to participate in other aspects of the investigation (for example, to undergo a medical examination to gather evidence of physical injury or collect forensic evidence) if this could help your case. You may also be asked to identify the suspect in a line up. You can add to your statement to An Garda Síochána throughout the investigation process, if, for example, you think of something which you had forgotten in your previous statement.

It is important to remember that your role as a victim in Irish criminal proceedings is very limited. You do not have a special legal status as complainant in criminal proceedings. You may be called as a witness in proceedings. This means that, during the investigation stage and trial stage, your involvement in proceedings is fairly limited. If you are called as a witness, you need to appear at the trial.

If you do not speak fluent English, An Garda Síochána will provide you with an interpreter free of charge. You are not entitled to written translation of case documentation (no case documentation, apart from your statement, will be released to you).

If you are unhappy with the treatment you receive you can make a complaint about the conduct of An Garda Síochána at your local Garda station or by contacting the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission or Garda Ombudsman, for short. See Garda Ombudsman.

If you are a witness for the prosecution in a criminal trial, you should tell the investigating Garda dealing with the case what your expenses are and provide receipts where possible. For example, you may miss out on wages for the days that you are in court and you may incur travel and subsistence expenses to get to court. The Garda will then ensure that an application is made to the judge to have witness expenses paid. It is a matter for the judge to decide whether or not to make an order to reimburse witness expenses.

What are my rights as a witness?

An Garda Síochána may call you for an interview as a witness. In this case you may have to go to a Garda Station and make a statement outlining everything you know about the case.

In limited cases involving intimidation of a witness, the court may allow a witness to give evidence by way of sworn deposition or video evidence if the witness cannot attend court through fear of intimidation. An adult (age 18 and over) can only give evidence by video-link if the court allows you to.
The Witness Protection Programme is also available to you in circumstances where there is a serious threat to your safety. Under this programme, you as a witness and your family are provided with new identities, immunity from prosecution and the means to establish a new life in another jurisdiction. It is an offence to attempt to discover or reveal the identity of a relocated witness.
You can find more information in the booklet Going to Court as a Witness which is available in English, Irish and other languages.

I am a minor. Do I have additional rights?

If you are a minor, you will be interviewed by a specially trained member of An Garda Síochána in a special interview suite.
If you are a witness under the age of 18 you may be able to give evidence via video-link or you may be questioned through an intermediary.

What information can I obtain from police or victim support organisations during the investigation of the crime?

When you report a crime, An Garda Síochána will provide you with details of the name, rank, telephone number and station of the investigating police officer. Following your report, An Garda Síochána issues a letter to you, which contains the number of the Crime Victims Helpline and a list of victim support agencies which can provide you with counselling, support and information. Most of these agencies offer their services free of charge.
An Garda Síochána will explain the investigation process to you and will endeavour to keep you up-to-date with any progress in your case, including whether an offender is charged or cautioned and tell you whether the offender is in custody or on bail and the conditions attached to it. Official communications are usually made by letter. You can request access to your own statement but no other documents will be released to you.

Can I receive legal aid?

An Garda Síochána will work with statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that you and your family receive appropriate physical, psychological and emotional support and advice. Generally speaking, you are not entitled to any medical, legal or psychological assistance free of charge. However, you may be entitled to State funded civil legal aid in certain circumstances and you should contact the Legal Aid Board for a list of local law centres. The Legal Aid Board provides legal advice and representation to persons primarily in civil matters, including to persons who are victims of domestic violence. If, however, in a criminal matter, the defence seeks to introduce the prior sexual history of the victim in the course of a criminal trial the Legal Aid Board will provide legal representation free of charge to victims of rape. The Legal Aid Board also provides legal advice free of charge to complainants in respect of rape and other forms of sexual assault.

How can I get protection, if I am in danger?

If you are concerned about your safety and welfare at home, you can apply to the District Court for the issue of one of a number of orders to protect you. For example, a barring order can be issued to protect you in your own home. You can attend at the local District Court to apply for such an order or speak to a member of An Garda Síochána in such circumstances. You can also obtain advice from the Legal Aid Board.
Also, the Witness Protection Programme as detailed above under “your rights as a witness” protects witnesses who may be in danger.
It is open to the court to direct that the accused stay away from the victim or stay away from a certain place. Again, a member of An Garda Síochána can assist you in this regard.
In situations of domestic violence, refuge may be available from certain voluntary organisation (see https://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Cosc)

What services and assistance can I be given during the investigation of the crime?

You can access victim support. When you report a crime, An Garda Síochána will provide you with information about victim support services. Victim support agencies offer counselling, support and information, often free of charge, to victims of crime. You can also phone the confidential Crime Victims Helpline for information and support on Freephone 116006 or call-save 1850 211 407 (office hours are Monday 10.00 a.m. to 7.30 p.m., Tuesday to Friday 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and Saturday 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.).
You can access victim support services, which are provided by voluntary agencies, usually free of charge. These agencies provide information, support and counselling. The Irish Tourist Assistance Service provides free assistance to tourists who have become victims of crime. They provide emotional support, translation services, embassy details and can arrange accommodation/ transport and address medical needs. They do not provide financial assistance or insurance/ legal advice.
If applicable to you, the following may also assist you:
If you have an intellectual disability, you will be interviewed by a specially trained police officer in a special interview suite. If you have a physical or mental disability An Garda Síochána will endeavour to provide for any of your special needs or requirements;
If you are a member of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender Community and are the victim of a homophobic attack, An Garda Síochána can refer to you a specially trained member of An Garda Síochána who can deal with your report;
If you are a victim of a racist incident, An Garda Síochána will inform you of the designated Ethnic Liaison Officer in your area. You will be interviewed by a specially trained member of An Garda Síochána, who can deal with your report.
If you have been the victim of a sexual offence, you will be interviewed by a specially trained police officer. Where possible, the services of a police officer and doctor of the same gender as you will be made available to you. An Garda Síochána have a specialist investigation unit in Dublin (Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit) and a special, fully equipped interview suite in Store Street Garda Station, Dublin;
If you are elderly, An Garda Síochána will take all possible steps to protect you and will advise you about home security and staying safe.
If you are a family member of a victim of murder or an unlawful killing, a specially trained Garda Liaison Officer will be assigned to you throughout the case.
You can receive medical or psychological assistance but you may be asked to pay for it unless you have valid health insurance. However, citizens of the 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland can benefit from the European Health Insurance Card. You can call the emergency units of hospitals at the European emergency number 112.

Are there opportunities to reach settlement/conciliation or to start mediation between the offender and myself?

Generally, there is no such provision in Irish law. However, if the crime you are a victim of is committed by a first-time offender who is under the age of 18 and the offender accepts responsibility for the offence, there are two alternative processes to the criminal justice system in which you can take part and are given an active role in a dispute:
An Garda Síochána can administer a process to caution the child rather than take him or her to court. The child may be placed under the supervision of a Juvenile Liaison Officer for a period of time. You may be invited to be present during a formal caution and your views will be taken into account.
Another process known as the Family Mediation Conference brings you and the young person together in a safe environment via a trained facilitator. Its purpose is to enable the young person to repair the harm caused by their offence. The procedure can be attended by you, the young person, your and his /her supporters (community representatives, family members, friends or relatives nominated by you or young person, and members of the community). If you would prefer not to attend, the facilitator can represent your views during the conference. During this process, an action plan for reparation will be agreed

which may include an apology to you, financial or other reparation to you, or initiatives within the child's family and community that might help to prevent re-offending. The court directs that this take place, often on the recommendation of the Probation Services. If the offender fulfils the conditions of the programme, the case may be closed.
For adult offenders who have accepted responsibility for the offence, the Probation Service may organise a meeting whose purpose is to enable the offender to repair the harm caused by their offence, but only in appropriate cases. There are at present two pilot mediation services in Nenagh, County Tipperary and Tallaght, County Dublin. It is envisaged that these will be extended to other areas in due course. You can attend with your supporter, the offender and his/her supporter, and members of the community. During the proceedings, an action plan for reparation will be agreed. The action plan may include an apology to you, financial or other reparation to you, or initiatives within the community that might help to prevent re-offending. The court directs that this take place, often on the recommendation of the Probation Services. If the judge is satisfied that the offender has fulfilled the conditions of the programme, the case may be closed.

How will my case continue after the end of the investigation?

After the investigation a decision whether or not to prosecute is made. In less serious crimes, An Garda Síochána may make the decision in the name of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). In serious crimes An Garda Síochána will send the case file to the Office of the DPP, who will consider the evidence and decide whether or not to prosecute the case. The DPP will take your views into account when making a decision whether to prosecute but will place the 'public interest' above your interests. You will have little or no contact with the prosecution team during this stage of proceedings and cannot discuss the case with them. It is always open to a victim however to correspond with the DPP. See Guide for Victims and Witnesses
An Garda Síochána will keep you informed, usually in writing, about any developments in the case, including about the outcome of proceedings.
When the DPP makes a decision not to prosecute, the reason is communicated only for the following offences: murder, manslaughter, infanticide, workplace fatalities, and fatal road traffic accidents occurring after 22 October, 2008. For more information you can read the booklet The Role of the DPP, available in English, Irish and other languages.
If you withdraw your report the DPP may either close the case or pursue it without your co-operation.

Can I appeal if my case is closed without reaching the court?

Generally, the decision of the Director of Public Prosecutions is final. However, if it is decided that the case should be closed, you can submit a written request to the Director of Public Prosecutions for a review of the decision. A member of your family can also request a review. See booklet the Role of the DPP. If there is evidence to suggest that the decision was capricious, the decision can be reviewed by the courts. Alternatively, you may be able to initiate a private prosecution but only in very limited circumstances.

I am a foreigner. How are my rights and interests protected?

If you are a foreigner and you have suffered from a crime in Ireland you have all the rights described above.
An Garda Síochána will provide you with an interpreter free of charge throughout the proceedings.
If you are a tourist in Ireland, you can get free assistance provided by the (non-statutory) Irish Tourist Assistance Service to tourists who have become victims of crime. They will provide you with emotional support, translation services, and embassy details and can arrange accommodation/ transport and address medical needs. They, however, do not provide financial assistance or insurance/ legal advice.
If you are a victim of a racist incident, An Garda Síochána will inform you of the designated Garda Ethnic Liaison Officer in your area. You will be interviewed by a specially trained member of An Garda Síochána, who will deal with your report.

More information

Victims Charter 2010 – in English , Irish and six other languages.
The Petty Sessions (Ireland) Act 1851 – in English
Criminal Justice Act 1951 – in English
Statute of Limitations (Amendment) Act, 2000 – in English
An Garda Síochána Act, 2005 – in English
Criminal Justice (Administration) Act 1924 – in English
Constitution of Ireland (Bunreacht na hÉireann) – in English
Prosecution of Offences Act, 1974 – in English
Criminal Justice Act, 1999 – in English
Domestic Violence Act, 1996 – in English
Criminal Justice Act, 1999 – in English
Criminal Justice (Amendment) Act 2009 – in English
Children Act, 2001 – in English
Criminal Evidence Act, 1992 - in English
Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act, 2008- in English

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(OLD)2 - My rights during the trial

How can I be involved in the trial?
What are my rights as a witness?
I am a minor. Do I have additional rights?
Can I receive legal aid?
How can I get protection, if I am in danger?
How can I claim damages from the offender or receive compensation from the state?
Are there opportunities to reach settlement/conciliation or to start mediation between the offender and myself?
I am a foreigner. How are my rights and interests protected?
More information

How can I be involved in the trial?

The prosecution lawyer will answer your questions about the trial process but will not discuss the case or your evidence with you. If you would like to familiarise yourself with the court in advance of your appearance, you can ask the Court Service to arrange a visit for you. The Office of the Director of

Public Prosecutions has produced an information booklet Attending Court as a Witness. The Court Service of Ireland has produced a guide for young witnesses Going to court available as a booklet and DVD.
You may be called as a witness to give evidence in court. In this case, you will receive a witness summons from An Garda Síochána, which will tell you the time, date and place of the court hearing. If called as a witness, you need to attend.
Generally, you can be present at the trial proceedings. Sometimes, particularly in cases involving serious offences, if you are a witness you may be precluded from attending the court hearing until called to give evidence. If you are not appearing as a witness, you may still be able to attend the court hearing unless it is held in private for a particular reason. In general, justice in Ireland is administered in public but there are some exceptions. For example, all family law matters are held in private. If you are the victim of rape, you have the right to be accompanied to court by a supporter.
When sentencing the offender, the court may take into account the impact of the crime on you. The judge may ask for a victim impact report to be prepared. This is a statement outlining the affect that the crime has had on your life. If you have been a victim of a violent or sexual offence or any offence under the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997, the court must take into account the impact of the crime on you. In addition in such cases, you have the right, upon application, to present a victim impact statement to the court on the impact of the crime. This takes places after the offender has been found guilty. The judge may ask the Probation Service to prepare a victim impact report to assist with determining the most appropriate sentence for the offender. The Probation Service will also take your needs into account when preparing a pre-sentence report on the offender and in making recommendations for sentencing options.
An Garda Síochána will inform you about your entitlement to court expenses and will keep you informed of the final outcome of the trial.

What are my rights as a witness?

If you have been called as a **witness** you have to give testimony at trial. In limited circumstances, it is possible to refuse to testify:
If you are the spouse of the offender, you cannot be compelled to give evidence for the prosecution except in the following cases:
The offence in question is of violence or the threat of violence to you, your child or the accused's child, or a person under 17 (includes an adopted child)
The offence is a sexual offence in relation to your child, the accused's child or a person under 17 (includes an adopted child)
The offence consists of attempting or conspiring to commit or of aiding, abetting, counselling, procuring or inciting commission of either of the above two offences
If you are co-offender of the crime
The above exemptions also apply to former spouses in respect of offences that occurred during the marriage.
If you are a member of diplomatic staff.
As a witness, you may also be cross-examined (cross-examination means when the defence can ask you questions about your statement and evidence) by the defence. The representative of the prosecution (or a senior police officer in less serious cases) will present the evidence and examine you, while the defence may cross-examine you. A statement, under oath in court, is usually known as "sworn evidence". It is not read back to a witness, but examination or cross-examination may ensue from that sworn evidence.
All trials must take place in public (except in certain circumstances such as family law matters) and you as a witness will give evidence in open court and cannot remain anonymous. If you are the victim of rape or certain sexual offences however, the public will be excluded from your court hearing and your anonymity will be protected. The public is excluded from incest hearings and your anonymity will be protected.
If you are called to give evidence at the trial the Courts Service of Ireland can provide support and information (but not legal advice) to you
If you are a young witness, you can also consult the guide for young witnesses "Going to Court" which is available as a booklet and DVD, from the Courts Service of Ireland.

I am a minor. Do I have additional rights?

If you are **under 14 years** old or you have an intellectual disability, you will not be required to swear an oath before giving your evidence at trial.
If you are under 18, you may be permitted to give evidence via video link or you may also be allowed to give evidence through an intermediary.
If you are a young witness, you can also consult the guide for young witnesses "Going to Court" which is available as a booklet and DVD, from the Courts Service of Ireland.

Can I receive legal aid?

Victims are not usually permitted separate legal representation with one exception outlined in the next paragraph.
Separate legal representation is available to you if you are a complainant in the prosecution of a person for rape and the defence wants to introduce evidence relating to your prior sexual history. Under this provision, you will not have to make a financial contribution to the cost. In this case the Legal Aid Board will provide a lawyer to represent you free of charge. You may at any stage consult your own lawyer, known as a solicitor, at your own expense. Contact details for solicitors may be obtained from the Law Society.
There are a number of voluntary agencies, which provide court accompaniment and other victim support services, usually free of charge.

How can I get protection, if I am in danger?

It is open to the court to direct that the accused stay away from the victim or stay away from a certain place. A member of An Garda Síochána can assist you in this regard.
Also, the Witness Protection Programme protects witnesses who may be in danger.
In situations of domestic violence, refuge may be available from certain voluntary organisation (see https://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Cosc)

How can I claim damages from the offender or receive compensation from the State?

You can claim damages from the offender if you are a victim of crime or a dependant of a victim of crime who has died as a result of the crime.
The court can order the offender to pay compensation in respect of any personal injury or loss resulting from the offence (or any other offence that is taken into consideration by the court in determining sentence) to you if you have suffered such injury or loss. For example, this is quite common with regard to property damage. A compensation order is made only after the offender is convicted and it is treated as a sentence or a condition of a sentence.
The judge decides whether a compensation order will be made and for how much. You will not be consulted regarding the amount. The offender's means are taken into account when determining the amount. There is no upper ceiling set on the amount that can be awarded under a compensation order in the High Court. However, the maximum amount that can be awarded is €6,348.69 in the District Court and €38,092.14 in the Circuit Court.. The amount cannot exceed what you would receive in a civil action. The Probation Service may be asked to oversee payment.
If you are a victim of a violent crime (or a dependant of a victim), if you were injured as a result of trying to prevent the commission of a crime, prevent the escape of someone in custody, save a life, or assist a police officer, you might be also entitled to **compensation from the State** and may apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal administrating the Scheme of Compensation for Personal Injuries Criminally Inflicted. Please consult the factsheet on compensation to victims of crime in Ireland (available in English and other languages) on the European Judicial Network website.

Are there opportunities to reach settlement/conciliation or to start mediation between the offender and myself?

Generally, there is no such provision in Irish law. However, if the crime you are a victim of is committed by a first-time offender who is under the age of 18 and the offender accepts responsibility for the offence, there are two alternative processes to the criminal justice system in which you can take part and are given an active role in a dispute:
An Garda Síochána can administer a process to caution the child rather than take him or her to court. The child may be placed under the supervision of a Juvenile Liaison Officer for a period of time. You may be invited to be present during a formal caution and your views will be taken into account.
Another process known as the Family Mediation Conference brings you and the young person together in a safe environment via a trained facilitator. Its purpose is to enable the young person to repair the harm caused by their offence. The procedure can be attended by you, the young person, your and his /her supporters (community representatives, family members, friends or relatives nominated by you or young person, and members of the community). If you would prefer not to attend, the facilitator can represent your views during the conference. During this process, an action plan for reparation will be agreed which may include an apology to you, financial or other reparation to you, or initiatives within the child's family and community that might help to prevent re-offending. The court directs that this take place, often on the recommendation of the Probation Service. If the offender fulfils the conditions of the programme, the case may be closed.
For adult offenders who have accepted responsibility for the offence, the Probation Service may organise a meeting whose purpose is to enable the offender to repair the harm caused by their offence, but only in appropriate cases. There are at present two pilot mediation services in Nenagh, County Tipperary and Tallaght, County Dublin. It is envisaged that these will be extended to other areas in due course. You can attend with your supporter, the offender and his/her supporter, and members of the community. During the proceedings, an action plan for reparation will be agreed. The action plan may include an apology to you, financial or other reparation to you, or initiatives within the community that might help to prevent re-offending. The court directs that this take place, often on the recommendation of the Probation Services. If the judge is satisfied that the offender has fulfilled the conditions of the programme, the case may be closed.

I am a foreigner. How are my rights and interests protected?

If you are a foreigner and you have suffered from a crime in Ireland you have all the rights described above.
If you are a witness who is living abroad you may have the right to give evidence via video link or telephone link.

More information

Criminal Justice Act 1993 – in English
Criminal Justice (Amendment) Act 2009 – in English
Constitution of Ireland (Bunreacht na hÉireann) – in English
Criminal Law (Rape) Act, 1981 – in English
The Criminal Law (Incest Proceedings) Act, 1995 – in English
Children Act, 1997 – in English
Criminal Evidence Act, 1992 – in English
Criminal Justice Act, 1999 – in English
Sex Offenders Act, 2001 – in English
Probation of Offenders Act, 1907 – in English
Criminal Damage Act, 1991 – in English
Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act, 2008- in English

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(OLD)3 - My rights after the (first) trial

Can I appeal against a sentence or if the defendant is declared not guilty?
Is further appeal possible?
What rights do I have after the court sentence enters into force?
More information

Can I appeal against a sentence or if the defendant is declared not guilty?

A victim of crime cannot appeal the sentence, however, in the case of trials of serious crimes heard in the circuit, central criminal or special criminal courts, a victim of crime or a family member of a victim of crime who is unhappy with the sentence may make a written request to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to appeal the sentence. However, the decision to appeal the sentence is for the DPP to make. The DPP has the right to appeal where she/he considers the sentence to be excessively lenient. These provisions only apply to trials of serious crimes. The DPP must request a review within 28 days of the sentence being handed down but can apply for an extension of up to 56 days in certain circumstances.

Is further appeal possible?

Normally only one appeal is allowed. However, a further appeal may occur on a point of law. Again the decision is made by the DPP.

What rights do I have after the court sentence enters into force?

If you are the victim of a serious sexual or violent offence, you can ask the Irish Prison Service to notify you prior to the release of the offender. Sex offenders released from prison after September 2001 must also notify An Garda Síochána of their home address and any subsequent changes of address.
You can also contact the Prison Service's Victim Liaison Officer (see Victim Liaison Service) to obtain information about the prison and parole system, make a complaint, or request notification about significant developments in the offender's sentence management, such as release date.
The Prison Service will ensure that, if they are considering allowing the offender out on temporary release, any potential risk to you and the content of your victim impact statement (with your permission) will be taken fully into account.
The Parole Board of the Irish Prison Service advises the Minister for Justice and Law Reform in relation to the administration of long-term prison sentences. Prisoners who are serving determinate sentences of eight years or more but less than 14 years can have their cases reviewed by the Parole Board at the half of sentence stage and prisoners who are serving sentences of 14 years or more, including life sentences, will have their cases reviewed after seven years in custody. The Parole Board will take into account information concerning you and your family when making a recommendation for release of the offender. You can submit a request to the Parole Board that your views be considered in relation to sentence management decisions (e.g. regarding temporary release and parole). If you would like to make a submission, you must inform the Prison Victim Liaison Officer.
You have no access to any data or documents at this stage but you will be informed of the outcome of the parole or temporary release hearing.

More information

Criminal Justice Act, 1993 – in English

Victims Charter, 2010 – in English
Sex Offenders Act, 2001 – in English
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(OLD)4 - Help and support for victims of crime

The Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime
An Garda Síochána
Irish Courts Service
Director of Public Prosecutions
The Probation Service
The Prison Service
Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal
Citizens Information Board
Legal Aid Board
Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission
Crime Victims Helpline
Rape Crisis Network Ireland
Support After Crime Services
Women's Aid
Court Support Service
Advic
One in Four
Irish Tourist Assistance Service
CARI
AMEN
Federation for Victim Assistance
BlueBlindfold.gov.ie
Ruhama

The Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime

The Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime is an independent body which operates under the aegis of the Department of Justice and Law Reform. It provides funding for voluntary sector organisations supporting victims of crime.

The Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime
assists in the development of strategies and policies to support victims of crime
provides financial assistance to voluntary bodies that support victims of crime
encourages the provision of services for victims of crime in all areas of the country
works in association with the Victims of Crime Office
promotes awareness of the services available to victims of crime
supports the Crime Victims Helpline

CONTACTS:
Website: http://www.csvc.ie/

An Garda Síochána

An Garda Síochána is Ireland's national police service.

An Garda Síochána
performs its functions at national and local level
makes referrals to victim support agencies
provides information on cases and support to victims
promotes an inter-agency approach to problem solving and improving the overall quality of life
works to achieve prevention, reduction in crime and the fear of crime

CONTACTS:
Website: https://www.garda.ie

Irish Courts Service

The Courts Service is an independent statutory agency, established by the Courts Service Act 1998, which manages the courts, supports the judiciary and ensures a quality service to all users of the court.

The Courts Service
performs its functions at national and local level
provides facilities for victims and their family in all new and refurbished court buildings
manages and maintains court buildings
works with victim support groups to provide a court accompaniment service

CONTACTS:
Website https://www.courts.ie/judgments

Director of Public Prosecutions

The Director of Public Prosecutions is the public prosecutor for the state and is an independent office established under the Prosecution of Offences Act 1974, where decisions are taken free from political or other undue influence.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions:
aims to operate to the highest professional standards and to treat all those with whom it has dealings fairly, equally and consistently, without any wrongful discrimination

has three divisions: Directing Division, Solicitors Division and Administration Division
considers victims' views when making decisions
appeals a sentence to a higher court if considered unduly lenient
considers requests for reviews of the decision and in appropriate cases carries out an independent internal review
See booklets Going to Court as a Witness and The Role of the DPP available in nine languages.
CONTACTS:
Website: https://www.dppireland.ie

The Probation Service

The Probation Service is an agency of the Department of Justice and Law Reform. The role of the service is to act as lead agency in the assessment and management of offenders in the community.
The Probation Service
performs its functions at national and local level
provides probation supervision, community service, anti-offending behaviour programmes and specialist support services
provides services to both adult and young offenders, in the community and in custody and aims to stop them committing further offences
conducts family conferences and on the request of the court provides a Victim Impact Report
directs restitution by offenders in appropriate cases
CONTACTS:
Website: http://www.probation.ie/

The Prison Service

The Prison Service is an independent body since 1996, which operates as an executive agency of the Department of Justice and Law Reform. The Irish Prison Service deals with male offenders who are 16 years of age or over and female offenders who are 17 years of age or over.
The Prison Service
performs its functions at national and local level
ensures that no additional distress is caused to victims by any action of an offender while imprisoned
deals with male offenders who are 16 years of age or over and female offenders who are 17 years of age or over
has a mission to provide safe, secure and humane custody for people who are sent to prison
is committed to managing custodial sentences in a way which encourages and supports prisoners
CONTACTS:
Website: https://www.irishprisons.ie

Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal administers the Scheme of Compensation for Personal Injuries Criminally Inflicted under which victims of crime can apply for compensation.
The Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal
administers the Scheme of Compensation for Personal Injuries Criminally Inflicted
considers applications from people who suffer a personal injury or death as a result of a crime of violence
will look for a Garda report on the crime
The Scheme of Compensation for Personal Injuries Criminally Inflicted
pays compensation for expenses and losses suffered as a direct result of a violent crime or while assisting or trying to assist in preventing a crime or saving a human life
may award compensation on the basis of any vouched out of pocket expenses, including loss of earnings, experienced by the victim or, if the victim has died as a result of the incident, by the dependants of the victim
CONTACTS:
Website: https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/0bff8-criminal-injuries-compensation-scheme/

Citizens Information Board

The Citizens Information Board is the statutory body which supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a broad range of public and social services.
The Citizens Information Board
performs its functions on national and local level
provides the Citizens Information website, http://www.citizensinformation.ie/, and supports the voluntary network of Citizens Information Centres and the Citizens Information Phone Service 1890 777 121
CONTACTS:
Website: http://www.citizensinformation.ie/

Legal Aid Board

The Legal Aid Board is an independent, publicly-funded organisation whose mission is "To provide a professional, efficient, cost-effective and accessible legal aid and advice service".
The Legal Aid Board
performs its functions at national and local level
is responsible for the provision of civil legal aid and advice to persons of modest means, in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995
provides legal aid and advice primarily by solicitors employed by the Board in law centres
provides services on a nationwide basis through 33 full-time and 12 part-time law centres,
incorporating three full-time law centres comprising the Refugee Legal Service (RLS)
CONTACTS:
Website: http://www.legalaidboard.ie/

Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission

The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission is responsible for receiving and dealing with all complaints made by members of the public concerning the conduct of members of An Garda Síochána.
TheGarda Síochána Ombudsman Commission
has the mission to provide the public with an independent and effective oversight of policing, and to deal with the public's complaints concerning Gardaí fairly and efficiently

is also obliged to investigate any matter that appears to it to indicate that the conduct of a Garda may have resulted in death of, or serious harm to, a person
CONTACTS:
Website: https://www.gardaombudsman.ie

Crime Victims Helpline

The Crime Victims Helpline provides information, emotional support and referral to other services to victims of crime. Its phone number is Freephone 116006 or call-save 1850 211 407.
For more information, click here.

Rape Crisis Network Ireland

The Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI) acts as an umbrella organisation for rape crisis centres in Ireland to provide services such as counselling, advice, helpline, advocacy, SATU/medical forensic examination accompaniment and court accompaniment.
The Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)
performs its functions at national and local level
provides support and information to member Rape Crisis Centres
campaigns for funding and improvement of services
undertakes research and collects data relating to sexual violence
campaigns for the social and legislative changes
raises public awareness about sexual violence and the needs of survivors
CONTACTS:
Website: http://https://www.rcni.ie/

Support After Crime Services

The Support After Crime Services is a voluntary service founded in January 2006, which provides emotional and practical support to all persons affected by crime.
The Support After Crime Services
offer victims of crime practical and emotional support in a confidential manner operating under clear guidelines and policies
provide victims of crime with information on the criminal justice system
give practical assistance in completion of a victim impact statement
accompany victims/witnesses to court
CONTACTS:
Website: https://www.supportaftercrimeservices.ie

Women's Aid

Women's Aid is a national voluntary organisation which provides support and information to women and their children who are being physically, emotionally, financially and sexually abused in their own homes.
Women's Aid
performs its functions on national and local level
is a feminist, political and campaigning organisation committed to the elimination of violence and abuse of women through effecting political, cultural and social change
provides direct support services to women experiencing male violence and abuse
works from the principles of empowerment, collective action, self-help and mutual aid, inclusion and equality
provides direct services to women experiencing domestic violence through National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900 (available from 10a.m. to 10p.m.) and court accompaniment service
has self-development programmes and provides one-to-one support visits, outreach services, referrals to other agencies and advocacy
Website: https://www.womensaid.ie

Court Support Service

The Court Support Service is a voluntary organisation, funded by the Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime. Its volunteers are trained to support prosecution witnesses and their families who have been called to court to give evidence.
Court Support Services
is a voluntary organisation that provides support both before and during court proceedings in the Four Courts and at Tallaght District Court only.
its volunteers offer emotional support to the witnesses by accompanying them into court and remaining with them throughout the duration of the trial
its volunteers will arrange to meet the witnesses prior to the trial and take them on a 'Pre-trial Visit
CONTACTS:
Website: https://www.vsac.ie

Advic

Advic is national, non-profit registered charity which campaigns for greater rights for victims of homicide, their families and friends.
Advic
brings together families bereaved by homicide including those affected by murder, manslaughter and fatal assault
provides assistance and information to families via phone and email regarding issues they are faced with after the homicide, including referral to pertinent agencies; helps families to deal with the practicalities arising after a homicide
advocates for changes in our criminal justice system
helps families to survive the trauma of homicide by running a subsidised professional counselling service for families and friends of homicide victims
helps families of homicide victims to access the voluntary assistance scheme run by the Bar Council
CONTACTS:
Website: https://advic.ie

One in Four

One in Four is a registered charity with offices in Dublin, Ireland, which offers support for women and men who have experienced sexual abuse and/or sexual violence and also to their family and friends.
One in Four
exists to give voice to the experience of people who have experienced sexual abuse and/or sexual violence
actively seeks and welcomes at all levels of the organisation's work the involvement of people who have experienced sexual violence

provides a unique service to individuals and families through individual psychotherapy, group therapy, advocacy/support, and 24-hour support on online message boards; through campaigning, policy making, in-house research, training and consultancy work with statutory and non statutory agencies
CONTACTS:
Website: https://www.oneinfour.ie

Irish Tourist Assistance Service

The Irish Tourist Assistance Service (ITAS) is a free nationwide service offering support and assistance to tourists who become victims of crime while visiting Ireland.
The Irish Tourist Assistance Service (ITAS)
acts as a base where problems facing the tourist in the aftermath of a crime can be addressed promptly, with a view to getting holiday plans back on track
has trained staff and volunteers, who speak a variety of languages and provide assistance;
provides brochures in all tourist offices
CONTACTS:
Website: https://itas.ie

CARI

The CARI Foundation is a registered charity founded in 1989 which primary aim is to provide a professional, child-centred therapy and counselling service to children, families, and groups who have been affected by child sexual abuse.
CARI
aims to provide the most up to date education and information service for children, adults and professionals on the dynamics of child sexual abuse
aims to raise public and political awareness of these issues
aims to guarantee that they have in place sufficient resources nationwide to meet the demand that this increased awareness will promote provides Helpline where callers are able to explore concerns, feelings and fears regarding child sexual abuse in safety and anonymity
provides therapy for children and young people whose lives have been disrupted by experiences, exposure to, or allegations of sexual violence
CONTACTS:
Website: http://www.cari.ie/

AMEN

AMEN is a voluntary group, which provides a confidential helpline, a support service and information for male victims of domestic abuse.
AMEN
provides advice, support and legal information to male victims of domestic abuse and their children
has a Confidential Helpline
organises support group meetings whose purpose is to rebuild each member so that he can take up his place in life, strengthened and enriched by the experience
provides court accompaniment and counselling
CONTACTS:
Website: https://www.mensaid.ie

Federation for Victim Assistance

The Federation for Victim Assistance has as main objective to provide emotional and practical support to victims of crime.
The Federation for Victim Assistance
provides victim assistance at court and counselling
provides assistance for tourist victims of crime
helps with victim impact statements
CONTACTS:
Website: https://victimassistance.ie

Blue Blindfold.gov.ie

Ireland is a member of a European G6 Human Trafficking Initiative designed to ensure that the EU becomes more hostile environment for criminals engaged in the trafficking of human beings. The other five countries involved in the initiative are the UK, Poland, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. The campaign is designed to encourage the public to share any suspicions
Ireland is a member of a European G6 Human Trafficking Initiative designed to ensure that the EU becomes more hostile environment for criminals engaged in the trafficking of human beings. The other five countries involved in the initiative are the UK, Poland, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. The campaign is designed to encourage the public to share any suspicions or information on this crime with the Gardaí who will then investigate accordingly.
CONTACTS:
Website: https://www.blueblindfold.ie

Ruhama

Ruhama is a Dublin-based NGO which works on a national level with women affected by prostitution.
Ruhama is an NGO that works, on a national level, with women affected by prostitution including those who are victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. Ruhama provides a comprehensive range of services to women, tailoring interventions to individual needs. Ruhama provides a range of supports to allow women exit prostitution and reintegrate into mainstream society: including outreach, advocacy, counselling, safe accommodation, education (in-house and external), development/resettlement programmes, befriending, long-term support until woman becomes independent. Ruhama help women to access legal services, health care and housing. Victims of Trafficking have access to all services listed above.
CONTACTS:
Website: https://www.ruhama.ie

Last update: 06/04/2023

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1 - My rights as a victim of crime

What information will I get from the authority after the crime occurred (e.g. police, public prosecutor) but before I even report the crime?

(Please delete when inserting data)For example, information on:
how to report the crime

victim support
personal protection
legal aid and advice
compensation
interpreting and translating services
mediation
reimbursement of expenses
other – please describe

I don't live in the EU country where the crime took place (EU and non-EU citizens). How are my rights protected?

If I report a crime, what information will I receive?
(Please delete when inserting data)For example, information on:
***who to contact** at the local police or prosecutor's office for updates on the case*
*the decision **not to investigate** or to **close the investigation***
*the decision **not to prosecute** the suspect*
*the **release** or **escape** of the offender from custody*
***time** and **place** of the trial*
*the **criminal charges** against the suspect*

Am I entitled to free interpreting or translation services (when I contact the police or other authorities, or during the investigation and trial)?
(Please delete when inserting data)When? Under what conditions?

How does the authority ensure that I understand and that I am understood (if I am a child; if I have a disability)
(Please delete when inserting data)Please describe how the authority ensures the victims' rights to understand and to be understood (information in Braille, easy-to understand language, child friendly language etc…)

Victim support services
Who provides victim support?

Will the police automatically refer me to victim support?
(Please delete when inserting data)Please specify if the police asks victim whether he or she wants to be contacted by a victims' support service or whether the police informs victims that the victim may contact a victims' support organisation

How is my privacy protected?

Do I have to report a crime before I can access victim support?

Personal protection if I'm in danger
What types of protection are available?

Who can offer me protection?

Will someone assess my case to see if I am at risk of further harm by the offender?

Will someone assess my case to see if I am at risk of further harm by the criminal justice system (during investigation and trial)?

What protection is available for very vulnerable victims?

I am a minor – do I have special rights?

My family member died because of the crime – what are my rights?

My family member was a victim of crime – what are my rights?

Can I access mediation services? What are the conditions? Will I be safe during mediation?

Where can I find the law stating my rights?

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2 - Reporting a crime and my rights during the investigation or trial

How do I report a crime?

How do I find out what's happening with the case?

Am I entitled to legal aid (during the investigation or trial)? Under what conditions?

(Please delete when inserting data)For example, information on:
Am I entitled to legal assistance?
Am I entitled to legal representation?
Is it for free? Under what conditions?

Can I claim expenses (for taking part in the investigation/trial)? Under what conditions?

Can I appeal if my case is closed before going to court?

Can I be involved in the trial?

What is my official role in the justice system? For example, am I or can I choose to be a: victim, witness, civil party or private prosecutor?

What are my rights and obligations in this role?

Can I make a statement during the trial or give evidence? Under what conditions?

What information will I receive during the trial?

(Please delete when inserting data)For example, information on:
progress on the case
the final ruling?

Will I be able to access court files?

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3 - My rights after trial

Can I appeal against the ruling?

What are my rights after sentencing?

Am I entitled to support or protection after the trial? For how long?

What information will I be given if the offender is sentenced?

(Please delete when inserting data)For example, information on:
length of sentence
type or category of prison
name of prison or institution(in same country or abroad)

Will I be told if the offender is released (including early or conditional release) or escapes from prison?

Will I be involved in release or parole decisions? For example, can I make a statement or lodge an appeal?

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4 - Compensation

What is the process for claiming damages from the offender? (e.g. court case, civil claim, adhesion procedure)

The court ordered the offender to pay me damages/compensation. How do I make sure the offender pays?

If the offender does not pay, can the state pay me an advance? Under what conditions?

Am I entitled to compensation from the state?

*(Please delete when inserting data) (**Instruction from validator**: please provide basic information on deadlines and procedures on claiming state compensation. Please do not reply by inserting a link to the section on state compensation in the European Judicial Network - Atlas as that link soon will be unavailable)*

Am I entitled to compensation if the offender is not convicted?

Am I entitled to an emergency payment while I wait for the decision on my compensation claim?

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5 - My rights to support and assistance

I am a victim of crime who do I contact for support and assistance?

*(Please delete when inserting data)***Provide contact details**:
Victim support organisations
provided by state
provided by non-governmental bodies (NGOs)
probation and mediation services
police
local authorities

Victim support hotline

(Please delete when inserting data) (Please provide for telephone numbers)
general hotline
hotline for specific types of crime (list crime types).

Is victim support free?

What types of support can I receive from state services or authorities?

(Please delete when inserting data)For example, information on:
medical support
psychological and emotional support
accommodation, including shelters
legal advice
other

What types of support can I receive from non-governmental organisations?

(Please delete when inserting data)For example, information on:
medical support
psychological and emotional support
accommodation, including shelters
legal advice
other

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