



Ministry of
JUSTICE

Getting it right for victims and witnesses



Easy read



Who we are

We are the Government.

What this document is about

This document is about **victims** and **witnesses**.



A **victim** is someone who has had a crime happen to them.



A **witness** is someone who knows something about a crime and may have to go to court to talk about it.



We want to make sure victims and witnesses get the right support.



At the moment this does not always happen.



This document talks about the changes we think need to be made.



We want to know what you think of these changes.

You can find out how to tell us on page 13.

What we think should happen

This part is about England and Wales.

Making sure the right people get support first

Not everyone needs or wants support after a crime.

But some people really need it.

We think these people should get support first

- victims of very bad crimes like murder, violence or rape

- people who have the same crime happen to them many times, like violence at home

- people who need more support than others.



The right support for victims and witnesses



We want to make sure victims and witnesses get the right support and are safe.



There is a document called the **Victims' Code**. It says what support people should get if a crime happens to them.



We want to make a new **Victims' Code** that is better and easier to understand.

It will help people get better support.



It will also look at things like

- better support for families of people who died
- making it easier to complain about bad support.

Going to court



A lot has been done to give people better support if they go to court to talk about a crime.

But we want to do more.



For example we want victims to always get the chance to say how they feel after a crime.

The Police and the courts should use this information to help them make decisions.



And we want to make it easier and safer for people who go to court to talk about a crime.

For example by making sure they have all the information they need.

Local areas choosing their own support



We want people in local areas to be able to decide what support is right for them.



We want a person in each local area to be in charge of this.

This person will be chosen by local people.

They will

- listen to what support local people need
- decide who should get support
- work with other groups to get good support
- check the support is working well.



But we think it is better if the Government still decides about some support.

For example support for everyone in the country, like a helpline for victims of violence at home.



People who commit crimes doing more to help the people they hurt

We want people who commit crimes to do more to help the people they hurt.

This means things like

- helping pay for support for victims of crime
- saying sorry for what they have done.

Paying money

We want people who commit crimes to pay more money.

The money will help pay for support for victims.

This could be things like

- advice
- helping someone make their home safe
- support to go to court.



The **Victim Surcharge** is money that some people who commit crimes have to pay.

We want people who commit crimes to pay more.

This can happen if we get more money from

- people who are found guilty at court
- people who break the law in other ways.
For example by driving their car in a bad way.

Sometimes the money can be taken straight from the benefits money people get.

We want more money to be taken from people's benefits money where possible.

This would be up to £25 a week instead of £5.





We also want more people in prison to work.

Some of the money they earn can pay for support for victims.

Helping to make things better

We also want people who commit crimes to do more than pay money.

We want them to help put things right.



This could be things like

- writing a letter to the victim to say sorry
- meeting the victim to listen to how they feel.



We think victims should get this support if they want it.

Money for victims of violent crime

This part is about England, Wales and Scotland.



Some victims of violent crime can get money from us to help them. This is called **compensation**.

We need to make sure there is enough money to pay all the people who really need it.



We think it is right that these people can get money to help them after a crime

- People who are very badly hurt and cannot live in the same way. For example if they have lost their sight.



- Victims of sexual crimes and violent crimes.
- People who have violence happen to them a lot.
- Close family of people who die because of a violent crime.



But we think it is better if people who have not been badly hurt get good support instead of money.

This could be things like advice or someone to talk to.

We also think there should be some other rules.

For example people should not get money if



- they are in the country for only a short time. We think they should live here for at least 6 months



- they have been found guilty by a court of committing a crime.



How to tell us what you think

Please tell us what you think by 22 April 2012.



By post to
Bola Fabunmi
Victim and Witness Unit
Ministry of Justice
8.10
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ



By email to
victimsconsultation@justice.gsi.gov.uk



If you have any questions you can

- send an email to the above address
- phone Bola Fabunmi on 020 3334 2584



You can tell us what you think of our ideas here if you want to