

Victim Care Booklet

advice and guidance from your local police



Your rights under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime:

- We will update you about your case on at least a monthly basis, and tell you if someone is arrested, bailed or cautioned in connection with your case, unless you ask us not to.
- We will pass information about you to Victim Support so that they can offer you help and support, unless you ask us not to.

A free copy of the Code of Practice can be obtained by calling 020 7273 4417 or visit www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/victims-code-of-practice

This document is available in other styles,
formats and languages upon request.

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1. Your Service - Our Commitment

Your Service - Our Commitment

West Mercia Constabulary and our criminal justice partners are committed to giving you the best possible service at all times.

We appreciate that being a victim of a criminal act can be a distressing experience. We have put together this booklet to help you through this difficult time. It contains details of your statutory rights and gives information about where to go to obtain help and advice. We have included space at the back for your own notes.

We hope you find this booklet useful, but if you have any further questions please contact the reporting officer or person dealing with your crime, whose details can be found on the front cover of this booklet.

Our promise to you

Whenever you come into contact with us, you can expect to receive the following service:

- We will listen carefully to you and do our best to meet your needs
- We will be clear on what action can be taken and will discuss and seek your agreement on the next steps
- We will treat you politely and professionally, and with respect and dignity at all times
- We will demonstrate that we **care**, we are **committed** and that you can **trust** us to deliver what we say we will
- We will encourage you to tell us about the service you received and make improvements where at all possible

1. Your Service - Our Commitment

How you can help us to deliver our promise to you:

Please:

- Give us as much information about the crime as you can
- Keep us updated with any developments using the contact details on the front of this pack
- Tell us how you would like us to contact you (i.e. telephone / e-mail / letter / text) and provide us with the appropriate contact details
- Tell us about any individual circumstances you feel are relevant, to help us tailor our service to you

Thank you for reporting the crime to us. It is an essential first step in bringing offenders to justice.



2. Roles of Agencies

Roles of Agencies within the Criminal Justice System (CJS)

- **Police**
Following a report of a crime, the police will decide what to do next based on known facts. We will collect evidence and investigate the crime.
- **Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)**
The role of the Crown Prosecution Service is to receive and review the evidence collected by the police and decide on prosecution issues.
- **Court**
If the decision is made to prosecute, the court will listen to the evidence and make a decision on whether or not the person is guilty. Where appropriate the courts will pass sentence.
- **Victim Support**
Victim Support is a charity, independent of the police, which offers help and support to people who have experienced crime.

If you have access to the internet, a virtual tour of the criminal justice system has been developed. This explains reporting of crime, police investigation, prosecution, decision making, court processes and sentencing. It provides information on the personal support that is available at all stages, including after the court case, when relevant.

Please visit www.cjsonline.gov.uk for a virtual walkthrough.

If you do not have personal access to the internet your local library can assist you.

3. What to Expect - First Contact

Our First Contact With You

- We carefully assess each crime and always consider your individual needs.
- We do not attend all scenes of crime. Some crimes are dealt with over the telephone by highly trained staff.
- We can deal with many crime reports more effectively by telephone, obtaining all the information we need. We still investigate these crimes.

Collecting Evidence

- An assessment will be made as to whether or not a forensic investigator needs to attend the scene to collect samples for forensic analysis.
- We do not examine all crime scenes. You will be advised on this issue by the person dealing with your incident.
- If you find any potential forensic evidence such as finger or footprints, please protect and preserve them until advised otherwise. Tell the person dealing with your crime what you have found.

Property

- We need to record accurate details of any property stolen to increase the chances of recovery.
- Please provide us with any serial numbers and/or photographs of your personal possessions you may have.
- If you find anything else missing after the first report, please update us by contacting the person dealing with your crime. Alternatively call 0300 333 3000 leaving the details if that person is not available.



3. What to Expect - The Investigation

Giving a Statement

- If your crime is detected you MAY have to give evidence in court (please refer to page 9).
- If you are asked to give a statement of evidence and a suspect is charged in relation to this incident, your statement and all other evidence will be passed onto the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Everyone involved with the case will read your statement, for example the police, the CPS, the defence and the magistrates or judge.
- You may also wish to provide a Victim Personal Statement. This is entirely optional but will provide you with the opportunity to state how the crime has affected you - physically, emotionally, financially or in any other way. For more information on the Victim Personal Statement visit www.cjsonline.gov.uk

House to House Enquiries

- If your crime is dealt with over the phone, you can help by asking friends and neighbours if they have seen or heard anything that may assist the enquiry.

- If an officer attends the scene they may carry out house to house enquiries.

Crime Prevention

- The person dealing with your crime can give general crime prevention advice. However if you require more detailed information this person will advise you who to contact.
- Alternatively you can visit the Home Office crime prevention website www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Victim Support

- Victim Support is a charity, independent of the police, offering help and support to people who have experienced crime. They have specially trained people who can help and advise victims. We recommend their services, and it is force policy to refer your details to them unless you ask us not to. Should you decide to contact them yourselves you can do so using one of the telephone numbers quoted on page 15.

Keeping in Touch

3. What to Expect - Keeping You Informed

- If you have further information about your incident please contact the person dealing with your crime using the contact details given on the front of this booklet. Alternatively dial 0300 333 3000. The operator will ensure you are put through to the person who can best deal with your update.
- Please be aware that the officer dealing with your crime may change. You may wish to add any new contact details to the front page of this booklet.

Your rights under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

- We will keep you informed and provide updates
 - within one week of the report
 - after any subsequent significant event
 - thereafter monthly until the investigation is concluded or you agree that no useful purpose would be gained in further updates unless there are significant developments.
- We will update you by your

preferred means of contact.

- We will provide you with a reference number and contact number for the person dealing with your crime and any other central point of contact such as a local Public Service Desk and/or Witness Care Unit if applicable. (These are explained more fully on page 9).
- Where applicable we will create an investigation plan to include forensic investigation, witness identification and statements, victim updates, identification of property, other enquiries and identification of suspects through intelligence.
- We will carry out an assessment of your individual circumstances, taking into account issues such as Race, Religion or Faith, Gender, Disability, Age, Sexual Orientation and Language. This will help us to identify people with specific needs or who are vulnerable and may need extra support.

3. What to Expect - What Happens Next

- We will continue to review the investigation and collect new evidence. This may involve taking further statements, speaking to witnesses or doing forensic tests. (Whatever happens, you will be told whether or not the crime is being investigated further or if the investigation is closed and the reason why).
- You will be told if a suspect is arrested, charged, bailed or the subject of an out-of-court resolution such as a caution or reprimand. The person contacting you will explain this to you.
- There are a number of ways that offenders under 18 years of age can be dealt with. You may be consulted on this.



3. What to Expect - Prosecutions

Who decides to prosecute?

- The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decides whether to pursue a prosecution after considering the evidence collected by the police.
- CPS will only proceed to prosecution if there is enough evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction and it is in the public interest to do so.
- CPS are guided by a Code of Practice and you can obtain a copy free of charge by calling their information branch on 020 7796 8023.



3. What to Expect - Going to Court

If your case goes to court the following will happen.

- Generally speaking you will only be called to give evidence if the person charged pleads “**not guilty**”.
- If you are required to give evidence, you will be offered support from the Witness Service, which is confidential and free.
- You will be contacted by a person from a Witness Care Unit. They will be your single point of contact throughout the criminal justice process, provide you with practical support and give you the information you need.

Witness Care Units

- West Mercia has dedicated Witness Care Units. They are joint CPS and police units and manage the care of victims and prosecution witnesses from the point at which the defendant is charged through to the conclusion of the case. These units will provide you with the following service:
 - A single point of contact for you. This means you will be allocated a named person, who will be your contact for all communication throughout the case.
 - This person will complete a needs assessment for you where a defendant has pleaded “**not guilty**”. This will help to identify any specific support that you need, and will highlight any areas of concern that you have in attending court.
 - They will keep you updated with the progress of the case by your preferred means of contact, and inform you of the final outcome.

3. What to Expect - Additional Support

You will receive help, advice and guidance from our Witness Care Unit throughout the progress of the case. You will be offered support at all stages and they will also identify any special needs that you may have. Alternatively you can contact the Victim Support Scheme on the following numbers:

Victim Support can be contacted between the hours of 8am until 8pm, Monday to Friday

Hereford	0845 126 4101
Shropshire (Including Telford & Wrekin)	01743 362812
Worcester	0845 126 4101

Care and support in court is available through the Witness Service.

4. Other Questions You May Have

1. What is a Public Service Desk?

These are locally based units staffed by people who are trained to record, investigate and keep you informed about criminal matters. They are able to take reports over the telephone. If there are matters that need closer and more personal follow up with you then they may hand it to a more appropriate person. They provide an effective service that allows patrol staff to attend and deal with the more complex and difficult crimes that, for a number of reasons, require the physical presence of a police officer.

In some cases, the person you reported your crime to may feel there is nothing to be gained by a forensic examination of your home or car. The reason for our decisions will always be explained to you, and we will let you know what to expect next. If you have been assaulted, they will almost certainly want to photograph your injuries.

2. Is compensation available?

If you have been injured in a violent crime, you can apply for a payment under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. For more

information on the scheme, ask for the leaflet 'Victims of Crimes of Violence - A Guide to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme'. You can get this from the police, from Victim Support, from your nearest Citizens Advice Bureau, or from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority telephone: 0800 358 3601 or visit: www.cica.gov.uk.

All other claims for compensation are considered by the courts when dealing with offenders.



4. Other Questions You May Have

3. If you have removed my vehicle, when and how will I get it back?

The police will only remove vehicles to prevent further loss or damage to the vehicle, or if it is causing an obstruction to other road users. Sometimes we need to remove a vehicle to allow a forensic examination to take place. The police must authorise the release of the vehicle back to you - this is to ensure all necessary enquiries have been completed. We recognise this may

be very inconvenient to you and aim to finish our enquiries as quickly as possible. There is a release fee that must be paid, and in most circumstances, your insurers will meet this cost. However, you must check with the insurance company.

4. Which reference number do I use for insurance purposes?

Please quote the Crime Reference number on the front of this booklet.



5. Your Views

Police

What should I do if I am not satisfied with the service I receive from the police?

West Mercia Constabulary is committed to delivering a high standard of service at all times. However we recognise that we will not always meet all the needs of our customers and there will be a number of reasons for this. We therefore carry out regular telephone satisfaction surveys and you may be the subject of such a survey. You can tell the operator who contacts you about how you felt and what aspects of service you were not happy with. Alternatively you can pursue a complaint. Whichever way you choose we aim to learn from our mistakes and make improvements wherever we can.

Your views are very important to us. If you have any comments, good or bad, regarding the information provided or service delivered please write to us at

Quality of Service
Strategy, Performance and
Communications Unit

West Mercia Constabulary
PO Box 55, Hindlip Hall,
Worcester, WR3 8SP
or via -email at:
contactus@westmercia.pnn.police.uk
(please note this e-mail address is
not monitored 24hrs a day)

Making a complaint

If you have a complaint about the police you can write to:

Head of Professional Standards
Department
West Mercia Constabulary
PO Box 55,
Hindlip Hall,
Worcester,
WR3 8SP

5. Your Views

Crown Prosecution Service

For matters relating to the CPS please write to:
Chief Crown Prosecutor,
West Mercia Area,
Artillery House,
Heritage Way,
Droitwich,
Worcestershire,
WR9 8YB

Courts Service

For matters relating to the courts please write to:

Courts Service,
P.O. Box 2676,
Comberton Place,
Kidderminster.
DY10 1WE

We welcome your views on this booklet, its format, content, the language used and explanations given.

Please either write to us at:

Quality of Service
Strategy, Performance and
Communications Department
West Mercia Constabulary
PO Box 55, Hindlip Hall,
Worcester, WR3 8SP

or via e-mail at:
contactus@westmercia.pnn.police.uk
(please note this e-mail address is not monitored 24hrs a day)

6. Useful Telephone Numbers

Please note some of the numbers below will not be staffed 24 hrs per day

Victim Support

National Helpline	0845 30 30 900
Herefordshire (8am until 8pm, Monday to Friday)	0845 126 4101
Shropshire (inc. Telford & Wrekin) (8am until 8pm, Monday to Friday)	01743 362 812
Worcester (8am until 8pm, Monday to Friday)	0845 126 4101

West Mercia Constabulary

Police Non-Emergency Number	0300 333 3000
Emergency Services Text Number (For people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired)	80992
Mini-com	08456 000 303

Other Useful Numbers

Alcoholics Anonymous	0845 769 7555
Age Concern	0800 00 99 66
Childline	0800 1111
Crimestoppers (to report crime anonymously)	0800 555 111
Domestic Abuse Helplines (Hereford & Shropshire)	0800 783 1359
(Worcestershire)	0800 980 3331
Drinkline	0800 917 8283

6. Useful Telephone Numbers

Please note some of the numbers below will not be staffed 24 hrs per day

Drugs Helpline (FRANK)	0800 77 66 00
Complaints (West Mercia Constabulary)	01905 332214
Complaints (Independent Police Complaints Commission)	0845 300 2002
Help the Aged - Seniorline	0808 800 6565
Lone Parent Helpline	0800 018 5026
Men's Advice Line	0808 801 0327
Missing Persons Helpline	0500 700 700
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children	0808 800 5000
Relate	08451 30 40 16
Respect (Help for Abusers)	0845 122 8609
Samaritans	08457 90 90 90
Shelterline (Assistance with housing problems)	0808 800 4444
The Gender Trust	0845 231 0505
Women's Aid National Helpline	08457 023 468



**This document is available in other formats
and languages. Please ring 0300 333 3000**

For more information on West Mercia Constabulary please visit:
www.westmercia.police.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE