

SUPPORT AFTER A CRIME

No one expects to be a victim of crime, but it can happen to anyone. **Victim Support Scotland** is an independent charity – we can help you with free practical assistance, emotional support and information for people affected by crime throughout Scotland.



Support for people affected by crime

Crime at any level can impact individuals in many ways – emotionally, mentally, physically, financially and practically. We can help with practical matters, explain your rights, guide you through the criminal justice process and provide emotional support.

“Victim Support Scotland is not just for serious crime. It can help anyone who is going through a difficult experience after a crime.”

We support anyone affected by any type of crime, no matter when it took place or if the crime has been reported. This includes victims, witnesses and their friends or family. Our service is confidential, so we will not discuss personal details with anyone else without permission*.

We help people to feel safer and find the strength to move forward after a crime by providing support tailored to individual needs. We can meet with people at home, in our office, or provide support by phone, webchat or email.

*We will need to alert someone else if there is a safeguarding issue or a risk to others.





Report a crime to the police

If you've been affected by a crime Victim Support Scotland can support you, whether or not you report the crime to the police.

If you decide to report a crime, the police will tell you:

- ▶ The name, number and station of the officer dealing with your case
- ▶ If they arrest or charge someone
- ▶ About any charges connected to the crime
- ▶ Whether your stolen property has been found or returned
- ▶ Any other information you should know about the case

They should also keep you up to date with what is happening with the case.

You should let the police know if you change your address or phone number. Also tell them if you are worried about your (or your family's) safety.



How we can help you

We can support you in a variety of ways, including:

- ▶ Talk to you about how you are feeling
- ▶ Give you information on your rights and how to access these
- ▶ Provide information about the criminal justice system
- ▶ Support you if you are asked to be a witness and give evidence in court
- ▶ Give you advice to help you stay safe at home and when you are out and about
- ▶ Provide practical help to enable you to complete forms, explain agency roles, and understand processes and specialist wording

Emotional support

Crime can have a damaging effect on mental and emotional well-being. Victim Support Scotland provides a safe place for people affected by crime to talk about fears, worries and emotions. We give people the support they need to cope with emotional stress.

“VSS offered some hope to help deal with the horrible, confusing and frightening situation... They listened, understood and helped me cope.”

Not everyone feels able to talk to friends and family, especially if they are affected by the crime too. Our staff and volunteers are trained to listen, give information and offer feedback. We can help make sense of what people have been through, discuss options and help people to feel they are getting their life under control again. Talking with us gives people the chance to get things off their chest and move forward after distressing experiences.



Practical help

Being a victim of crime can lead to all kinds of practical problems, ranging from property damage and making insurance claims to life-changing medical problems. Practical problems often act as reminders of the crime and make it harder to move forward.

Victim Support Scotland can help with simple tasks like enabling you to fill out forms, getting broken property fixed and giving you a personal alarm to help you feel safe. We can check if home security checks are available in your area and make a referral for you. We also provide help to understand the criminal justice system. We give people the necessary information to understand their options and signpost people to agencies that provide specialist support.





Going to court

Attending court and giving evidence can be a confusing and stressful experience; however Victim Support Scotland's Witness Service can support you through the process. The service is free and in every Sheriff and High Court in Scotland.

We can help you beforehand and on the day of the trial, by letting you see the court in advance, or sitting with you while you wait to give evidence. We can clarify the court process; explain the rights to special measures to make you feel safe so you can give your best evidence; and much more.

Accessing Support

Victim Support Scotland

We are here to support you after a crime or at court – whether the crime happened recently or a long time ago. You do not have to report the crime to the police to get our help. Our service is free, impartial and confidential, so we will not discuss personal details with anyone else without permission*.

If you would like to speak to us, please contact us using the details below.

Contact us

Call our free helpline on **0800 160 1985** (9am – 8pm, Mon – Fri) to speak to our friendly support team.

Find help, support and your local service at:

www.victimsupport.scot

info@victimsupportsco.org.uk

 **Webchat**

 **@vsscotland**

 **Victim Support Scotland**

We support people from all communities. If you'd like this leaflet in a different language, please contact us.



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President: HRH The Princess Royal

Victim Support Scotland is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered in Scotland SC002138.

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