



find the strength

Violence

Information from
Victim Support

www.victimsupport.org.uk

What is violence?

Every year there are hundreds of thousands of violent incidents in England and Wales. Threats and verbal abuse are forms of violence, just as much as physical attacks. Violence can happen anywhere – at home, in the street, in clubs and pubs, and at work. Often the victim will know their attacker. Some types of violence, such as domestic violence and racist attacks, affect particular groups of people.

Being threatened or assaulted is a frightening experience. No one should have to live in fear. Many people are shocked at how strongly they are affected by being threatened or assaulted. The effects can last a long time, particularly if you are afraid you will be attacked again.

We can help

Victim Support is the independent national charity for people affected by crime. We offer help to 1.1 million victims of crime every year, including thousands of victims of violence. Our volunteers are specially trained to give information, practical help and emotional support to help people find their strength after a crime like this.

The help we give is confidential, free and available to everyone. If you report a crime to the police they will pass your details to us (unless you ask them not to) and we'll contact you to talk about how

we can support you. But you can also contact us directly, whether or not you want to report the crime to the police and regardless of when the crime happened. Contact details are on the back of this leaflet.

If you do decide to report the attack, we can go to the police station and to court with you. We can give you information, help you apply for compensation and put you in touch with other organisations that can help.

If you've been assaulted by your partner, ex-partner or a family member, we have people specially trained to support domestic violence victims.

If you've been injured

If you have been injured in an attack it is always sensible to get medical help. You could be more badly injured than you realise, especially if you are in shock.

If you can't work because of your injuries you should tell your employer. They may ask you to fill in a self-certification form or to get a sick note from your doctor or the hospital.

You may be able to get Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you are sick for four days or more. Your employer may pay you more than this depending on your contract.

You can get more information about benefits from the Benefits Agency (check the phone book and www.direct.gov.uk), or your local Citizens Advice office.

Reporting the crime to the police

It is up to you whether or not you report the crime to the police. It may help to talk this over with someone, such as a Victim Support volunteer, first.

If you want to claim Criminal Injuries Compensation (see page six) you must report the attack to the police as soon as possible. Otherwise you can report the attack later, if you decide to.

The police may take a statement from you and should tell you if someone has been arrested and cautioned or charged.

Always tell the police if your attacker threatens or bothers you again, and even if you are just afraid that they might. This information may be important for decisions about, for example, the offender's bail application.

When the police charge someone, they pass the evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service who then decide whether to take the case to court.

Going to court

It can take several months for a crime to go to court. Most cases are heard in the magistrates' court. Some more serious cases are heard in the Crown Court.

If the person charged with the offence pleads guilty, you may not have to give evidence. But you should still be told the date of the court case and you can attend if you want.

If the person pleads 'not guilty', you will normally be asked to attend court to give evidence about what happened. The police will tell you if you need to appear in court as a witness. If this happens you don't have to go to court alone, you can usually take a friend or relative with you.

Victim Support runs the Witness Service in every criminal court in England and Wales. We give support and information to victims and witnesses about what happens in court.

We can arrange visits to the court so that you can look around before the trial. We can also find you somewhere quiet to wait before and during the hearing, and help with other things such as expense claims forms.

Note: From April 1, 2015, this service will be provided by the charity Citizen Advice.

Compensation

As a victim of violence you may be able to get Criminal Injuries Compensation, but only if you reported the crime to the police as soon as possible. We can give you further information about claiming compensation and help you to fill out the application form.

There may be other ways to get compensation. The courts can order the person who attacked you to pay you compensation. The police should ask you about how the crime has affected you so that the court has enough information to make a decision about this.

Alternatively, you may be able to take out a private prosecution or sue the person in a civil court to get compensation. You should get legal advice from a solicitor if you plan to do this. The costs involved in making a claim will vary. Find out how much you might have to pay before entering into any agreement.

Release of offenders

If the offender is sentenced to a year or more in prison, you should be asked by the Probation Service if you want to be told when he or she is to be released. You can tell them if you have any concerns about this. Your views may affect the conditions of the offender's release. You should get a leaflet about this from the police after the offender is sentenced.

If you would like support at that time, you can still get help from Victim Support.

For more information about Criminal Injuries Compensation

Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority,
Alexander Bay House
Atlantic Quay
15 York Street
Glasgow
G2 8JQ

CICA helpline: 0300 003 3601

www.justice.gov.uk

Contact your local Victim Support office



Our Victim Supportline **08 08 16 89 111** gives information and support for anyone affected by crime.

You can contact us using Text Relay by adding 18001 before any of our phone numbers.

Help us support other victims and witnesses. Text **VISU13** and an amount to **70070** to make a donation.

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