

# Journey to justice



## Easy Read Version

# Seeking justice



Justice is about using the law to judge and punish crimes in a fair way. This booklet will help if you decide to seek justice for your assault.



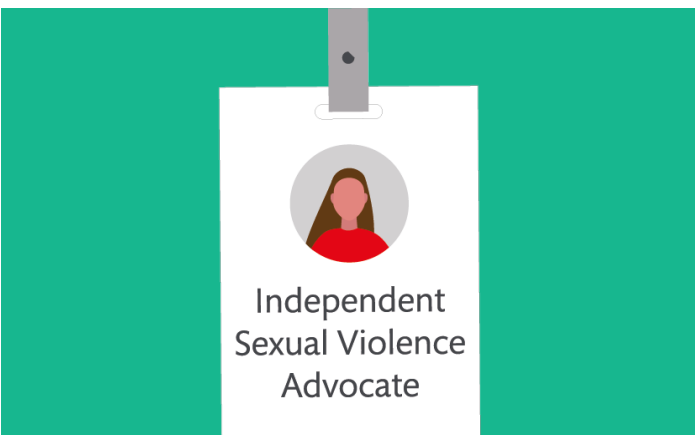
Getting justice can take a long time.

Understanding how it works and what happens can be helpful to you.



Not all cases will go to court but you have a right to 'tell' and 'be heard'.

If your case doesn't go to court it doesn't mean you are not believed.



Having an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) can help you to understand what happens. They are trained specialists who can offer support and advice.

There is more information in our easy read booklet "What is an ISVA".

## What to expect



Speaking out and telling someone what happened to you is a brave thing to do. Only you can decide whether to report it to the police or not.



If you decide to report it to the police you can go to a police station or call 101.

You could also report it online.



When you have made a report the police will contact you. This is called a First Account. It will be done over the phone or at your home with a police officer.



You will be asked more questions and asked to give more details. This will be written down or recorded using a video camera. This will be used if you go to court.



## What to expect



### Opening the investigation

This is when the police start to gather evidence.

They will speak to the person who has been accused of the assault.

They will also look for other things that will help to prove they did it.



### Support

Your case will be given to an officer.

They are called the Officer in Charge or OIC for short. Their job is to support you.

They will put you in touch with someone from Victim Support.



### Completing the Investigation

Once the police have all the evidence they need they will decide if they can charge the person who harmed you.

If they decide that they can't charge the person you might be able to ask them to look at the case again. This is called a Victim's Right to Review.



If the police think they have enough evidence to charge the person they will send your case to the Crown Prosecution Service or CPS for short.



The CPS will look at the case. It is their duty to make sure the right person is prosecuted for the right offence.



They will:

- Decide if the case should be prosecuted
- Decide what the person should be charged with
- Help the police in the early stages of the investigation
- Prepare and present the case at court
- Give you information, help and support you and any witnesses





## Going to court



If the CPS agrees that there is enough evidence to charge the suspect, the case will be prepared for court.

**GUILTY**

The suspect will go to a Magistrate's Court first to give a plea. This is when they say whether they are guilty or not guilty.

**NOT GUILTY**



If they plead guilty they will be sentenced. This is when the judge says what the punishment is for the crime.

For example it might be that they go to prison for a certain amount of time.



If the suspect pleads not guilty there will be a trial. This will be at a Crown Court.



If you are worried that the suspect will harm you further you must tell the police or your ISVA. The courts can then put bail conditions on them if needed.



This will stop them from doing certain things such as not contacting you or going near your home.

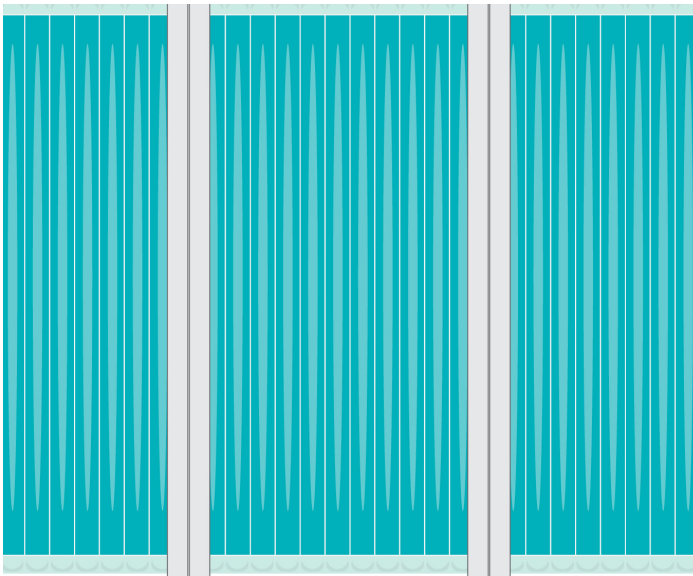


# Special Measures



Special measures are things that are put in place to help you when your case goes to court.

The police will ask for these measures to be put into place.



## Screens

These are put round the witness box so you don't have to see the defendant. This is the person who is on trial.



## Live Link

You can give evidence by a video link. You will be sat in another room and give your answers to a TV screen and microphone. They will then appear on a screen in the court.





## Intermediaries

Their job is to help you with questions and with what is happening whilst you are in court.



## Pre-trial recorded evidence (Section 28)

You can record your answers to questions before the trial. The recording will then be played on the day of the trial.



## Clearing the gallery

If you are at risk when you give evidence you can ask that members of the public leave the courtroom.



## What happens on the day of the trial?



The prosecutor and caseworker will come and introduce themselves to you. The prosecutor is the person who conducts the case against the person who is on trial.



12 jury members will be sworn in. The jury are the people who listen to the evidence in court then decide if the person is guilty or not guilty.



The barristers will give their opening speeches.

A barrister is hired by your solicitor to represent your case in court.



There will be a judge in the courtroom. They will listen to and oversee everything that is happening in the court.



You will be called to give evidence.

How you do this will depend on what special measures you have in place.



You will be asked questions about what happened to you. This will be by your barrister and the barrister who is for the defendant.



This may last a few hours or few days. It may be difficult and upsetting for you but you will be supported.



The defendant and any witnesses will give evidence and be asked questions.







The barristers will then give closing speeches. The judge will talk about all of the evidence. They will tell the jury what laws they need to think about.



The jury will go away to a private room to reach their verdict. This is deciding whether the person is guilty or not guilty. This may take a few hours or days.



When they have reached a verdict they will return to the courtroom and say what their verdict is.



If the person is found guilty they will be sentenced a few weeks after. This is the punishment for the crime.



## Sentencing



If the defendant is found guilty you have the chance to give a Victim's Personal Statement.

This is a statement saying how the crime has affected you and your life.

For example you might say that you are now too scared to go out.



The statement will be read out in court and will help the judge when they are sentencing.



Your ISVA can help you to write it.

The sentencing will happen a few weeks after the defendant is found guilty.

# Restorative Justice



Restorative justice gives you the chance to meet the person who abused you.



You can tell them how it has affected your life and ask them why they did it.

This might help them to understand the harm they have caused.



You can speak to the person who abused you face to face, write letters or speak through videos and calls.



Restorative justice is run by professionals who have lots of experience.



## Getting help



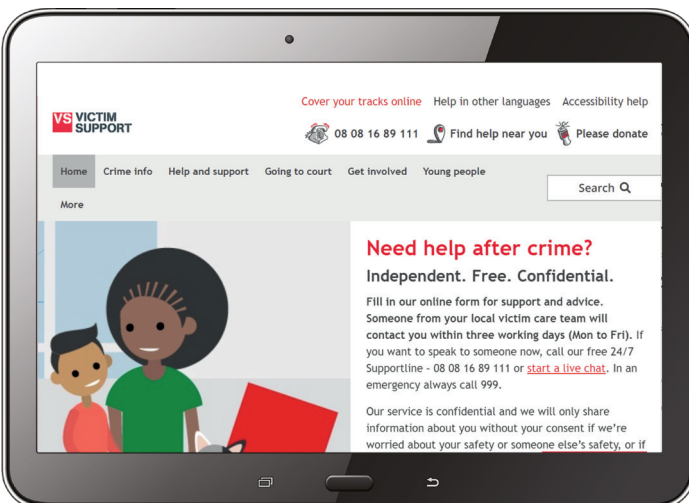
We are an independent charity offering free, confidential support to people affected by crime and traumatic incidents.



For more information and support contact us by:

Calling Supportline 08 08 16 89 111

Using Next Generation Text (add 18001 before any of our phone numbers).



Online at [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)



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