

Criminal justice and you

An essential guide for victims and witnesses

Keeping you informed

By Temporary Detective Superintendent Steve Wray

My name is Steve Wray. I'm a Temporary Detective Superintendent in charge of the Victim and Witness Care Units. The role of the Witness Care Officer is to provide a single point of contact for victims and witnesses in all prosecution cases, securing attendance in both Magistrates' and Crown Courts. Witness Care will deliver a quality service meeting individual needs and requirements contained within the 'no witness, no justice' requirement, and the Victim's Code of Practice.

We are there to have a positive influence on the willingness of victims and witnesses to attend court from point of charge. You will be assigned a Witness Care Officer who will liaise with you via your preferred means of contact through to the end of the case. You can ask them any questions you may have.

Your Witness Care Officer will: Provide you with advice and support to prepare you for court; Discuss your availability and obtain any dates you would not be available to attend court; Keep you informed of any developments in the case, updates of court hearings and the outcome of the case. They will offer practical help, including help with travel and accommodation, overcoming language barriers or accommodate disability and will put you in touch with the Victim Care Unit.

You can provide support or referrals to support services to help you cope and recover from the impacts of crime. It will make a referral to the Witness Service to arrange for pre-trial visits to court and support at court during the trial, and they will also discuss with you your victim personal statement and restorative justice. Thank you and I hope this is helpful.

Glossary

Prosecution - the institution and conducting of legal proceedings against someone in respect of a criminal charge

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Victim Code of Practice (VCoP) – The Victims’ Code focuses on the victims’ rights and sets out the minimum standard that organisations must provide to victims of crime.

Restorative Justice (RJ) – is an approach to justice that seeks to repair harm by providing an opportunity for those harmed and those who take responsibility for the harm to communicate about and address their needs in the aftermath of a crime.