

Criminal justice and you

An essential guide for victims and witnesses

Reporting a crime

By Kelly Bosence

Hello, my name is Kelly Bosence and I'm a contact officer at Devon and Cornwall Police. There are various ways you can report something that's happened to you or you have witnessed to Devon and Cornwall Police. All 999 and 101 calls, webchat and online reporting forms are answered by contact officers in the two force contact centres based at Exeter and Plymouth.

Contact officers in Devon and Cornwall Police are highly trained to assess the risk of each matter reported to: Ensure there is an appropriate police response; signpost to other appropriate agencies; take care to understand the needs and vulnerabilities of any person reporting and get appropriate advice and reassurance; record matters which are reported accurately. Contact officers will respond to you professionally, and treat you with respect and dignity.

They will take all the necessary details, by asking you questions about the situation. They will record the details of what happened correctly to make sure that you get the right police response to the situation, even if this is just to provide you with advice or tell you who could help you the best. They'll give you the reference number of the record created and let you know what will happen next.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger of a crime that is happening right now, then you should call 999. If you're deaf, hearing or speech impaired use our textphone service 18000 or text us on 999 if you've pre-registered with emergency SMS service Relay UK.

If you are a British Sign Language user, you can also use 999 BSL which will connect BSL users to a BSL interpreter remotely through an app or web based service. The interpreter then initially relay the conversation with a BT 999 call handler who will contact you to the right emergency service. This service has been set up, so no deaf person excluded where they need to make that emergency call. If this situation is not

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an emergency and you are deaf, hearing or speech impaired, then you can textphone on 18001 101 or text SMS 67101.

Devon and Cornwall Police also use Sign Live, which allows us to gain access to BSL interpreters for non-emergency reporting. To use this service, visit the Devon and Cornwall Police website and scroll down to the bottom to find “contact us”. You will find this service under “non-emergency”. A video conversation will begin between the BSL interpreter and the BSL user. The BSL interpreter will then contact the force directly and relay the message.

When a caller does not speak English as a first language, Devon and Cornwall police have the access to DA Languages, which is a translation service via the telephone. This can be used in emergency and non-emergency circumstances. DA Languages provides a telephone service for over 170 languages 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

There are Single Online Home forms on the Devon and Cornwall Police website you can use to report different things that are not happening now. Here are a few of the things that you can report using online services: A crime that has already happened, for example, criminal damage, stolen property or an assault; send an update or request an update for a crime you’ve already reported; report a problem with a neighbour. Or if you have a general enquiry or would like to let us know about some intelligence, you can contact us using a generic form under “report something else” which will then be reviewed and dealt with appropriately.

When you have reported something online, you’ll be sent an email with a reference number on it. This is not your crime or incident reference number, but if you need to contact police again, before you’re given either of those references, you can use the form reference number as your point of reference. Once your crime or incident has been recorded. You’ll be then sent an email with a crime or log number on it. This will be the number you need to use if you have to contact us again about that specific report.

As well as the online reporting forms for non-emergency matters, you can contact

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Devon and Cornwall Police by webchat. This is accessed from the website and after a few quick questions you'll be connected to a contact officer. You can also call the police in a non-emergency situation on 101.

When 101 has connected you to Devon and Cornwall Police, you'll be given a number of options to choose from. This is to make sure your call gets through to the right line to deal with your report. If you are not sure, then you can simply stay on the line without making a choice and you'll get through to the switchboard. They will ask you a few questions to make sure you're connected to the right department or reporting line, depending on your request. If you're trying to connect to a different force area for a non-emergent matter, press the hash key and request the force you need.

Thank you and I hope this was helpful.

Useful links

[Report a crime to Devon & Cornwall Police](#)

[Relay UK](#)

[Find your nearest police station](#)

In an emergency, call 999. For non-emergencies, call 101. You can also report a crime at any police station front desk. Click the link above to find your nearest station.

Glossary

Contact officer – a person acting as the first point of contact for 999 emergency and 101 non-emergency calls.

BSL – British Sign Language

Single Online Home – a digital contact platform that allows the public to report crimes online at any time of day. It is intended to be a consistent, easier way for the public to virtually interact with police forces in England and Wales.

DEVON AND CORNWALL
CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD



Criminal Justice System: working together for the public