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## **Victim support**

### **Victim Support Scotland**

Victim Support Scotland (VSS) is an independent, voluntary organisation that provides emotional and practical support, information and practical help to people affected by crime. VSS is present in all Scottish communities.

VSS can help you, whether or not you have reported the crime to the police.

Victim Support Scotland helpline: 0845 60 39 213 (Weekdays 8.30am to 4.30pm)

UK Victim Supportline: 0845 30 30 900  
(Weekdays 9am to 9pm; weekends 9am to 7pm)

Website: [www.victimsupportsco.demon.co.uk](http://www.victimsupportsco.demon.co.uk)

Email: [info@victimsupportsco.demon.co.uk](mailto:info@victimsupportsco.demon.co.uk)

## **Witness Service**

This is a court-based service run by VSS is provided by volunteers. It gives emotional and practical support to all witnesses attending court, including:

- advance visits to a courtroom
- information about court etiquette (how to behave in court), procedures and personnel
- emotional support for anxiety that the court appearance may cause
- arrangements for separate waiting rooms if there are concerns about contact with associates of the accused
- advice on practical matters such as parking and expenses
- a needs assessment after the trial, including referral to other agencies if required

## **Victim Information and Advice Office (VIA)**

VIA can give you:

- case-specific information
- information about the criminal justice system in general
- support and referrals to voluntary organisations that may be able to help you.

VIA is run by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. Your local Procurator Fiscal's Office can put you in touch with the local VIA office. You can find the address and phone number of your local Procurator Fiscal's Office in the phone book.

## **Scottish Women's Aid**

Women's Aid can offer you information, support and safe refuge if you have been physically, emotionally or sexually abused by a male partner or ex-partner. Women's Aid 'Open Door' policy means that you can go to refuges anywhere in Britain if you would not be safe in your own area, or if there is no space in your local refuge. You and your children can stay in a refuge as long as you need to.

Contact your local group by phone or in person during office hours. You will find them in the phone book. Most groups also have an on-call service for emergencies outside office hours.

National helpline: [08457 023 468](tel:08457023468)

Website: [www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk](http://www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk)

## **Rape Crisis**

Rape Crisis centres in Scotland offer information and support to anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted or sexually abused. The service is free and confidential and you will find their number in the phone book.

## **The Samaritans**

The Samaritans is a national charity that provides 24-hour confidential emotional support for anyone in crisis. They have introduced one easy-to-remember, low-cost number (see below), although you can still call your local branch number if you wish. You can find this number in your local phone book.

National helpline: 08457 909090

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Website: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

### **Religious organisations**

Religious beliefs can be a comfort to people in times of need, and you may wish to seek the help and support of your local place of worship.

## **Bereavement organisations**

### **Cruse Bereavement Care**

Cruse Bereavement Care is an independent voluntary charity offering:

- free information and advice to anyone who has been affected by a death
- free and confidential one-to-one and group counselling
- education, support, information and publications to anyone supporting bereaved people

Helpline: [0870 167 1677](tel:08701671677)

Website: [www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

Email: [info@crusebereavementcare.org.uk](mailto:info@crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

### **Lesbian & Gay Bereavement Project**

This project offers a confidential counselling service to lesbians and gay men bereaved by the loss of a same-sex partner, or anyone bereaved by the death of a lesbian or gay man.

Phone: [0208 455 8894](tel:02084558894)

## **Self-help Groups**

### **FOMC**

FOMC (Families of Murdered Children) is a self-help group that offers practical and emotional support to anyone who has lost a family member through murder. Its links with professional counselling

agencies and local health authorities help it provide a comprehensive range of services to its members.

Helpline: [01698 336646](tel:01698336646)

Website: [www.fomc.fslife.co.uk](http://www.fomc.fslife.co.uk)

## **PETAL**

PETAL (People Experiencing Trauma and Loss) is run by people who have lost a loved one through murder. It offers a free and confidential service to anyone bereaved by the murder of a family member or friend.

Phone: [01698 324502](tel:01698324502)

Website: [www.petal-support-group.org.uk](http://www.petal-support-group.org.uk)

## **RoadPeace**

RoadPeace, a national charity for road crash victims, can offer emotional and practical support to those bereaved or injured in a road crash.

Support line: [0208 964 1021](tel:02089641021)

Phone: [0208 838 5102](tel:02088385102)

Website: [www.roadpeace.org.uk](http://www.roadpeace.org.uk)

Email: [info@roadpeace.org.uk](mailto:info@roadpeace.org.uk)

## **The Compassionate Friends (TCF)**

TCF is run by bereaved parents and their families. It offers understanding, support and encouragement to parents after the death of their child or children. It also offers support, advice and information to other relatives, friends and professionals who are helping bereaved parents.

Phone: 0117 953 9639

Website: [www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

Email: [info@tcf.org.uk](mailto:info@tcf.org.uk)

## **Legal, Benefits and Other Advice**

### **The Benefit Agency**

The Benefit Agency is sensitive to the needs of newly bereaved people. Bereavement officers can help you work out if you can get any benefits in your new circumstances, for example, Bereavement Benefit. Home visits can be arranged.

Phone: 0131 229 4311

Website: [www.dss.gov.uk](http://www.dss.gov.uk)

### **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

Citizens Advice Bureaux provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice and assistance on legal matters. There are over 70 CAB offices and 190 CAB service points in Scotland. The CAB may refer you to local solicitors or to legal clinics for more assistance with

your problem. You can find the address and phone number of your local office in the phone book.

Website: [www.nacab.org.uk](http://www.nacab.org.uk)

### **The Law Society of Scotland**

All Scottish solicitors belong to this professional organisation. It can give you details about solicitors in your areas.

Telephone: 0131 226 7411

Website: [www.lawscot.org.uk](http://www.lawscot.org.uk)

Email: [lawscot@lawscot.org.uk](mailto:lawscot@lawscot.org.uk)

### **Lesbian & Gay Switchboard**

Help, information, advice and support.

Phone: Aberdeen 01224 212600

Edinburgh 0131 556 4049

Glasgow 0141 331 8327

### **Racial Equality Council (REC)**

The REC in your community promotes racial equality. They offer information and advice to people who think they have suffered racial discrimination or harassment.

Find your local REC by phoning the Commission for Racial Equality:  
0131 240 2600

Website: [www.cre.gov.uk/about/recs.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/about/recs.html)

## Compensation

### The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA)

You may be able to get financial compensation from CICA if you are:

- the victim of a crime of violence, or
- the dependant or relative of a person who has died as a result of a criminal injury or who was criminally injured but died from some other cause.

CICA may pay compensation for:

- medical expenses arising out of physical or mental injury
- loss of earnings
- lost support for dependants of victims who have died
- funeral expenses
- travel expenses
- rehabilitation for disabled victims
- pain and suffering
- bereavement
- loss of parental services

Awards of up to £500,000 can be made.

### Procedures

You can get an application form from:

- police stations
- hospitals

- local Victim Support Schemes
- the Witness Service
- local Citizens Advice Bureaux
- the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA)

Or you can download a form or apply online at: [www.cica.gov.uk](http://www.cica.gov.uk)

Victim Support Scotland can help you to fill in the form.

The completed application should be sent to:  
The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA)  
Tay House  
300 Bath Street  
Glasgow G2 4JR

Freephone: [0800 358 3601](tel:08003583601)

You should have an initial decision from the CICA within 12 months, while reviews and hearings may take longer. Your compensation will be paid as soon as you notify CICA that you accept the decision.

### **Emergency Awards**

CICA may make interim payments if a decision has not been made on the final amount of the award. This might happen, for example, when the victim's medical prognosis is still unclear.

## **Compensation through the courts**

If your case goes to court and the accused is found guilty of the crime against you, he or she may be ordered by the court to pay compensation for any loss or injury you have suffered as a result of the crime.

The amount payable is decided by the judge or sheriff at the time of sentencing, and takes account of the accused's financial circumstances. The accused pays the money to the court, which then forwards it to you.