

VICTIM VOICE

Signpost | Raise awareness

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

How to report crime and understand Victims' rights



WHY VICTIM VOICE?

Find out why Matthew Scott is launching this initiative

HELPING VICTIMS
FIND THEIR VOICE



VICTIM VOICE
#MAKINGKENTSAFER
KENT-PCC.GOV.UK

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Matthew Scott sets out what the Victim Voice initiative is and why it is being set up.

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Introduction

Victims are at the heart of my Police & Crime Plan and will be throughout my time as PCC. The Criminal Justice System has a specific process for victims and there is information out there about it, however I have decided to create this Victim Voice Initiative to collate the information in one place, and to raise awareness about victims' rights.

If you would like to do more to support victims, this will help you understand the process as well as providing you with other useful victim support service contacts.

Victims have repeatedly told me they feel their voice is not heard and they think reporting a crime does not lead to appropriate action by the criminal justice system.

My 2023 Annual Policing Survey showed most people DO report crimes to the police (81%) but those who did not told us (amongst other things) they were "too afraid" or "did not think we'd be taken seriously". Trust in the police is undoubtedly a problem, with victims ranking their trust in Kent Police as 4.5/10 compared to non-victims who scored their trust as 6/10.

I want people to feel confident that when they report crime, they get the information and support they deserve, and are legally entitled to.

Matthew Scott, PCC

The Police & Crime Commissioner is empowering the public to be more aware of victims' rights here in Kent.

He is hoping you can share this useful knowledge.

VICTIM VOICE

Objectives:

- 1/To understand victims' rights and the Victims' Code
- 2/To know how to report crime and antisocial behaviour
- 3/To know how to challenge if a victim is unhappy with the service/outcome
- 4/To know about other options which can help victims
- 5/To know about other services and safe spaces people can access

Helping Victims Find Their Voice

Support a friend or colleague:

When someone talks to you about their experiences, what should have been done differently?

Share the booklet: Download a version or read an accessible version on our website:

www.kent-pcc.gov.uk

or use the **QR code** below



THE VICTIMS' CODE: INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Justice revised the Victims' Code in 2021. It is a statutory Government document. Its main points are below.

If you are a victim of a crime that took place in England or Wales, the Victims' Code gives you the right to information and support from criminal justice organisations such as the police and the courts.

You also have the right to be referred to support services for victims.

You don't need to report the crime to the police to get help from these organisations.

You can call these organisations yourself and tell them what has happened.

You also have the right to support if you are a close relative of somebody who has been killed as a result of a crime, or if you are a parent or carer of a victim of crime aged under 18.

You can find the full Victims' Code here:
www.gov.uk/victims-code

The next two pages outline the 12 Rights within the **Victims' Code**.

1

To be able to understand and to be understood

2

To have the details of the crime recorded without unjustified delay

3

To be provided with information when reporting the crime

4

To be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to your needs

5

To be provided with information about compensation

6

To be provided with information about the investigation and prosecution

7

To make a Victim Personal Statement

8

To be given information about the trial, trial process and your role as a witness

9

To be given information about the outcome of the case and any appeals

10

To be paid expenses and have property returned

11

To be given information about the offender following a conviction

12

To make a complaint about your rights not being met

WAYS TO REPORT CRIME

In an **EMERGENCY** only call

999

when life is in
immediate danger
or when a
crime is in progress

101

Call **101** to report crime and other concerns that **do not** require an emergency response

For example:

- stolen car
- property damaged
- suspect drug use or dealing

Or:

- give information about crime
- have a general enquiry



Report

ONLINE

The easy way to report crime



Go to www.kent.police.uk/report



Report a crime, incident or non-injury collision in minutes



Receive your confirmation email and reference number immediately

What about nuisance or environmental issues?

You should contact your local council about general issues in your area like:



Dog fouling



Abandoned vehicles



Dumping and fly tipping



Vandalism of public property

www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council



Need to report a crime?

Do it online



A quicker way for you to report crime and incidents



Receive your confirmation email and reference number immediately

Go to www.kent.police.uk/report

Ask the Police

No need to phone.
Get an instant answer online.

Browse the
A to Z
question finder



www.askthe.police.uk

Crimestoppers – You can give information anonymously

CrimeStoppers.

0800 555111

100% anonymous. Always.



- We are not the police
- Nobody will know you have helped us
- We pay cash rewards of up to £1,000

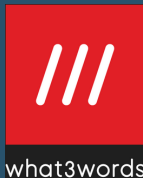
www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Front counters – Report to your nearest front counter



You can report issues to one of our front counters. To find your nearest one, enter your postcode in the Visit us section of the website.

www.kent.police.uk/contact



what3words is an app that defines your exact location, using a square made up of a unique combination of 3 words.

Kent Police staff who take your emergency calls use this.

Find out more by visiting what3words.com.

IF THE VICTIM WANTS TO REPORT TO THE POLICE

Victims can report a crime to the police by visiting a police station, by phone or online. The police should give them information about what to expect from the criminal justice system after reporting the crime.

If a support service for victims is already helping them, the victim can talk to the counsellors about whether they want to report the crime to the police.

The police may ask them to make a witness statement explaining what happened during the incident.

Before a victim makes a witness statement the police must assess their needs to see whether they would benefit from additional support. The witness statement will outline the details of the crime (including where and when it took place and what they saw).

Sometimes witness statements can be videoed instead of being written down. The police should discuss this with the victim.

They can also make a Victim Personal Statement (see page 10), which will be given to the court to explain in the victim's own words how the crime has affected them.

WHAT THE POLICE SHOULD DO

The police should tell the victim what will happen next, when to expect updates, carry out a needs assessment and refer them to victim services.

They should also be offered the chance to write a Victim Personal Statement and be given an opportunity to access Restorative Justice (see page 13).

The police should give them a crime reference number, a written confirmation of their report and the investigator's contact details.

The police have to tell the victim (within 5 days) if someone is arrested/charged, set free or released/is under investigation or is given a warning, is reprimanded or issued with a fixed penalty.

Sometimes the police will make the decision whether to charge or not, sometimes the decision will be made by the Crown Prosecution Service, based on the evidence gathered by the police. If either the police or Crown Prosecution Service decide not to charge they must inform the victim along with the reasons why.

Out of court disposals

The police or the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) may decide to deal with the case without taking it to court. This is called an out of court disposal (for example a caution).

The police or CPS will make the final decision after considering the full circumstances but must tell the victim the reasons for their decision.



POLICE

VICTIMS' CODE: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Keeping the victim informed

The police should inform the victim as progress is made in the investigation and let them know if any arrests are made and if suspects are charged.

The police will ask how often the victim would like to hear from them during the investigation and how they would like to be contacted (e.g. by phone, email or text).

If the police decide not to investigate the case, they must tell the victim and explain why.

Getting help from support services

A crime does not need to be reported to the police for a victim to access help from specialist support services.

If they **do** report the crime, the police can pass their details on to a support service that can provide practical and emotional support tailored to the victim's needs. This can include specialist support for children, for victims of sexual offences, or victims of domestic abuse.

If they do not want to be referred to specialist services, the victim can request that.

If their details are passed on, someone from a support service for victims will get in touch.

IF THE CASE DOES GO TO COURT

The victim will be referred to the local Witness Care Unit (WCU). This service will tell the victim when and where the trial will be.

The WCU will also support them before and during the trial and if they are being asked to give evidence.

The WCU also must inform the victim:

- of the time, date and location of any hearing.
- the outcome of any hearing within 5 working days of the WCU receiving the information from the courts (1 day in enhanced cases). NB: the WCU must be informed of the outcome by the courts within 5 working days of the hearing.

If the suspect pleads not guilty and the victim is required to attend court, they have the right to be informed of this within 1 working day of the WCU receiving notification from the Crown Prosecution Service.

The victim has the right to make a Victim Personal Statement to explain in their own words how a crime has affected them, whether physically, emotionally, financially or in any other way.

This is different from a witness statement. The Victim Personal Statement is considered by the judge or magistrate when determining what sentence the defendant should receive.

If the defendant is found guilty, the victim has the opportunity to request to read their Victim Personal Statement in court during sentencing, have the Prosecutor read it on their behalf or request the Judge or Magistrates consider it privately before delivering the sentencing outcome.

After the trial ends, the Witness Care Officer must tell the victim:

- the verdict - within 24 hours of having received it from the court who have 5 days (or 1 day for enhanced rights) to pass on the information.
- what sentence the offender receives if they're found guilty.
- if the offender appeals their conviction or sentence.



VICTIMS' CODE: GOING TO COURT

Being a witness

A victim of the crime who is appearing in court as a witness has the right to:

- where circumstances permit, meet the prosecutor who is presenting the case in court, who will explain what to expect and answer any questions the victim may have.
- wait in an area away from the suspect and the suspect's family and friends.
- have any special measures* in place if the court has ordered them.
- be introduced to a member of court staff (or witness support services) who will answer your questions about what is happening in the case during the trial.

*Special measures

Depending on the circumstances, the victim may be eligible for special measures during the trial. This is to help them present evidence in court.

Special measures could include:

- giving evidence and being cross-examined by the defence lawyer earlier in the court process using video as evidence, so the victim does not have to attend the trial at all.
- having an intermediary to help them to understand questions when being interviewed and at the trial.

*The Court will make the final decision if special measures are granted.



VICTIMS' CODE: IF THE CASE IS NOT PROGRESSED

Make a complaint

If a victim is not happy with the service they have received, or they're unhappy with the conduct of an officer or member of police staff, they can make a complaint.

The victim can do this at www.kent.police.uk or by calling 101.

The victim will be told if and how it will be investigated and when a decision is reached.

If you are unhappy with the outcome, you can ask for an appeal or review.

Kent Police
Victims' Right to Review
Scheme | Kent Police
(kent.police.uk)

Crown Prosecution
Service
Victims' Right to Review
Scheme | The Crown
Prosecution Service
(cps.gov.uk)

A Victim's Right to Review

The victim has the right to ask for a review of a decision made by the police or CPS not to progress their case.

A victim can ask for a review by the police when:

- A suspect has been interviewed and charged, but no charges will be brought to court.
- Officers decide the case does not meet the CPS threshold.

It does **not** apply if the suspect has been charged with something else. The scheme only applies to cases where the decision is to take 'no further action'.

The CPS can be asked for a review if:

- it decides not to bring charges, it discontinues or withdraws all charges, or offers no evidence.

Information about Victims' Right to Review can be found in the links on the left.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Restorative Justice

After the crime has taken place, the victim may want to ask the offender questions about what happened or let them know what impact the crime has had on them.

They may be able to do this through a process called **Restorative Justice**. If the offender is an adult and restorative justice is available in your local area, the police or support service for victims will inform them about how they can take part.

Both the victim and the offender need to agree for the contact to take place.

Our local provider is **Restorative Solutions**:
(restorativesolutions.org.uk)

Persistent Antisocial Behaviour

If the victim (or others with the victim's consent) have reported the same type of incident occurring in the same area 3 times or more, within a 6-month period, they can activate the Community Trigger (also known as ASB Case Review). They can do this through their local council's website.

If there is sufficient evidence of persistent antisocial behaviour, a Review Panel can look at the case and decide whether further action should be taken.

They can only do this if no other agencies are dealing with the matter at the time.

OTHER POWERS POLICE OR COURTS MAY USE

Clare's Law: under this scheme, an individual or relevant third party (for example, a family member) can ask the police to check whether a current or ex-partner has a violent or abusive past. This is the "Right to Ask". If records show that an individual may be at risk of domestic abuse from a partner or ex-partner, the police will consider disclosing the information.

Kay's Law

This means police have a duty to take into account the views of victims before releasing someone on bail. Police could be encouraged to use pre-charge bail instead of releasing suspects under investigation, where it is necessary and proportionate.

Kay's Law was introduced in Oct 2022 as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act.

Protection orders

There are a number of protective orders that can help victims of crime.

Ask the police, or the victim's support worker or legal adviser whether a domestic violence protection order, stalking protection order or non-molestation order might be appropriate in the circumstances.

The courts and/or the police may be involved in the decision to grant these orders.



SAFE SPACES AND OTHER PREVENTION ADVICE

All around Kent and Medway partners work together to provide "safe spaces" where people who feel vulnerable can go to seek help. Please **research your local area** to find out where these are.



There are also apps and "code words" in use across Kent and Medway, which people feeling vulnerable can use to seek help. See Ask for Angela/ Ask for Ani/ HollyGuard and local Safer Street walking home apps.



SUPPORT SERVICES

The PCC's office commissions many services to help victims. These are just some of the support services we fund.

www.kent-pcc.gov.uk

Any crime

Victim Support

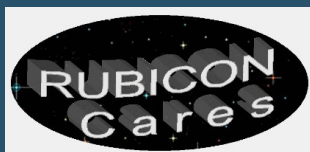
www.victimsupport.org.uk/resources/kent

0808 16 89 111



Rubicon Cares

www.rubiconcares.org



Sexual violence

Family Matters

www.familymattersuk.org



**Rape & Sexual Abuse
Support Services**

East Kent Rape Crisis Centre

www.ekrcc.org.uk



Restorative Justice

Restorative Solutions

www.restorativesolutions.org.uk



**RESTORATIVE
SOLUTIONS**

reducing harm, resolving conflict

SUPPORT SERVICES

Domestic abuse

KIDAS (Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service)

www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk



The Daisy Chain Project

www.thedaisychainproject.com



DAVSS (Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services)

www.davss.org.uk



Health Action

[www.healthaction.co.uk/
contact-page](http://www.healthaction.co.uk/contact-page)



Hourglass

[www.wearehourglass.org/
hourglass-services](http://www.wearehourglass.org/hourglass-services)



Kent & Medway NHS Trust

www.kmpt.nhs.uk/contact-us/



Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse

www.aafda.org.uk



SUPPORT SERVICES

Mary Dolly Foundation

[www.marydollyfoundation.org.uk/
contact-us/](http://www.marydollyfoundation.org.uk/contact-us/)



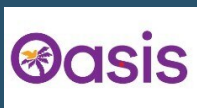
New Leaf (Swale)

www.newleafsupport.org



Oasis (Medway)

www.oasisdbservice.org



Rising Sun

[www.risingsunkent.com/
referrals](http://www.risingsunkent.com/referrals)



Sateda

[www.sateda.org/
contact](http://www.sateda.org/contact)



The Bloomers Trust

[www.thebloomerstrust.co.uk/
contact](http://www.thebloomerstrust.co.uk/contact)



Qwell

www.qwell.io/kentpcc



Deaf community

SignHealth

Text 07800 003421
da@signhealth.org.uk



SUPPORT SERVICES

Stalking

Victim Support Stalking Advocate

[www.victimsupport.org.uk/
resources/kent](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/resources/kent)
0808 16 89 111

Hate crime

Victim Support

[www.victimsupport.org.uk/resources/
kent](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/resources/kent)

Choice Support

www.choicesupport.org.uk



Road death bereavement/serious injury

Brake

www.brake.org.uk

Vulnerable young people

Catch22

www.catch-22.org.uk



Dandelion Time

www.dandeliontime.org.uk



Salus

[www.salusgroup.org.uk/
contact-us](http://www.salusgroup.org.uk/contact-us)



OTHER AGENCIES

CrimeStoppers

Report information anonymously
via 0800 555 111

www.crimestoppers-uk.org

CrimeStoppers.

Action Fraud

If you've been a victim of fraud

www.actionfraud.police.uk



Streetsafe

Tell Kent Police about a time you
felt unsafe and where at

www.police.uk/streetsafe

(This is a pilot run by Police UK
where people can anonymously
tell authorities about areas which
they feel are unsafe.)

True Vision

Report hate crime incidents via:

www.report-it.org.uk

(This is another UK Police funded
app.)



Kent Police

To **report a crime online**, or to find out what is going on in your area (like who your beat officer is), please go to the Kent Police Website:

www.kent.police.uk



Call 999 in an emergency or 101 to report something which does not need an emergency response.

If you have a hearing or speech impairment you can register with the [emergencySMS service](#). Then you can text the police on 999. Go to their website:

www.relayuk.bt.com/how-to-use-relay-uk/contact-999-using-relay-uk.html

NOTES



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CONTACTYOURPCC@KENT.POLICE.UK