

## Feedback and complaints

Information for people  
who are unhappy with  
the service they have  
received

## **What you can expect from Victim Support**

Victim Support is made up of almost 100 local charities around England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They are joined together in a national association which sets standards for the services that Victim Support and the Witness Service will provide.

What you can expect from us - both the service you get and the work we do 'behind the scenes' - are set out in our *National standards*. If you want to see these standards they are on our website. You can also get a copy from your local branch, or from our National Office in London.

Many people do not realise that Victim Support is a charity and that most of our helpers are volunteers. Sometimes we are limited in the help we can offer victims and witnesses because we do not have enough money or volunteers to do everything we would like to. We don't wish to make excuses for problems that happen because of this, but we hope that people will understand when lack of resources is to blame.

## **If things have gone wrong**

Victim Support wants to give the very best services to victims and witnesses of crime but, as with all organisations, things sometimes do go wrong. When we make mistakes or when people are unhappy with our services we need to know about it. This gives us a chance to try and put things right and to avoid the same thing happening in the future.

## **Telling us about a problem**

If you are unhappy with the way we have treated you, you may simply want to give us feedback or comments. Or you may want us to respond or to take some action to sort things out. The choice is yours.

## **Feedback**

If you just want to comment or give us feedback you can do so in writing, by telephone or in person. We welcome all comments and feedback and we will take your concerns seriously. Comments can help us to improve and develop our services. Local and national contact details are given on the back of this leaflet.

## **Formal complaints**

If you wish to make a formal complaint then we have a written procedure that we will follow. If you want to see the full details of this, you can get a copy from the local branch or the National Office. The same procedure is used by all the local charities that are part of Victim Support. It also sets out when and how the national association may get involved.

There are some things that you will have to do to make a formal complaint. This leaflet gives you the basic information you need.

## **How we deal with complaints**

We take all complaints seriously. Your complaint will be treated confidentially and only people who need to know will be informed. If we do not think we have done anything wrong, we will try to explain clearly why we have made that decision. If we discover that mistakes have been made, we will apologise formally to you. We will also, where appropriate, take action to try to make sure that the same problem does not happen again.

# Making a complaint

## Stage 1

To make a formal complaint you have to tell us within six months of being aware of the problem. We also need to have some details of the problem in writing. You can either write it down yourself, or you can give the details to the local Victim Support or Witness Service manager who will make a careful note of what you say. The kinds of information we need include:

- details of the problem
- dates and times of any key events
- the names of people who can act as witnesses
- evidence to confirm things (for example letters you may have received)
- how the problem has affected you or other people
- what you would like us to do.

We will take a copy of the complaint and we recommend that you keep a copy too.

If you are complaining about a particular person, there are procedures to make sure that they do not carry out the investigation and that you will not have to deal with them.

A senior local manager will investigate your complaint. They will consider whether or not we dealt with you as we should (and as set out in our standards) and write to you within four weeks to tell you what their decision is.

## **Stage 2**

If you are not happy with the manager's decision you can continue to pursue your complaint with the trustees who are responsible for your local Victim Support charity.

To do this you need to either write directly to the chairperson of the trustees (the local office will give you the contact details) or tell the local office that that is what you want to do.

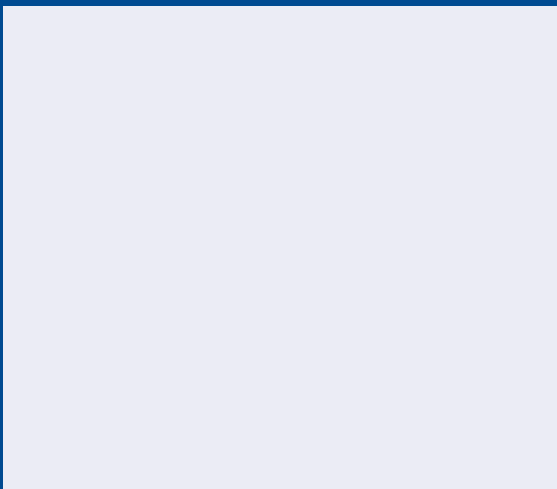
The chair of trustees will review what happened at stage 1 of your complaint. They will look at all the information the manager considered, and decide if a further investigation is needed. They may need further information - which could include wanting to talk to you in person. They will reconsider the complaint and will write to you within a month to tell you what their decision is.

### **Stage 3 - appeal**

If you are not happy with the chair's decision, you can refer your complaint to the national association, based at Victim Support's National Office in London.

To raise your complaint with the national association you should write to the Chief Executive - the address is on the back of this leaflet. You will be sent an acknowledgement letter within 14 working days. The National Office will investigate and reply directly to you within one month of receiving your letter.

Contact your local Victim Support branch



Victim Supportline can also put you in touch with your local Victim Support branch.

Published by Victim Support  
President HRH The Princess Royal

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Charity registration: 298028 Company no: 2158780  
Registered in England Limited by guarantee  
Registered office as above.

March 2006