

General information about Victim Support

Victim Support is the independent national charity for people affected by crime. Staff and volunteers offer free and confidential information and support for victims of any crime, whether or not it has been reported and regardless of when it happened.

Each year Victim Support offers help to over one and a half million people who have been affected by crime.

This help is provided through a network of local branches across the whole of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. (There are separate organisations covering Scotland and the Republic of Ireland). Staff and volunteers within these branches are trained to provide emotional support, information and practical help to people who have suffered the effects of crimes ranging from burglary to the murder of a relative.

Victim Support also runs the Witness Service, based in every criminal court in England and Wales. Staff and volunteers provide support and information about the court process to witnesses, victims and their families, before, during and after the trial.

People affected by crime can also contact the Victim Supportline - a national lo-call telephone number - which offers support and information to victims and witnesses of crime in complete anonymity, and can put people in touch with local Victim Support services and other relevant organisations if required.

More than 13,000 people work for Victim Support, 93% of them on a voluntary basis.

Victim Support:

- offers a free and comprehensive service to all sections of the community
- works for the rights of victims, witnesses and their families and for greater awareness of the effects of crime
- is committed to ensuring that minority and disadvantaged groups are welcomed and involved throughout the organisation
- is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee
- is a completely independent organisation, but as a community-based service it has close working relationships with a wide range of other voluntary and statutory services
- is funded by the Home Office and through charitable fundraising.

The National Office of Victim Support:

- employs 120 staff, mainly at its office in Kennington Park, London SW9. The Victim Supportline and the 12 London Crown Court Witness Services are also managed from the National Office
- is responsible for supporting and developing the work of local branches, raising public awareness and recognition of the effects of crime, and promoting victims' rights.

As a result of the rapid growth of the organisation, it is changing its structure and moving towards amalgamating local services into areas (generally along the lines of counties), which can provide a more integrated service to victims and witnesses.