



Support for disabled victims and witnesses of a crime.

Crown Prosecution Service

Victim - the person the crime is against.

Witness - a person who says what they have seen and what they know about a crime.



**Easy read version of Support for disabled victims and witnesses of crime.
September 2017**



What this booklet is about

1



Crimes against disabled people

2



Support for disabled victims
and witnesses

6



What help can I get?

8



1. Reporting a crime

8



2. When the police look
into the crime

9



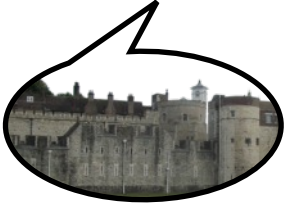
3. After someone is charged
with the crime

12



4. Going to court

14



5. After the trial

17



Special measures

18



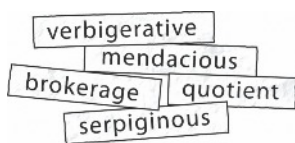
How we supported a disabled victim

20



How we supported a disabled witness

22



Difficult words

25



What this booklet is about



CPS

We are the Crown Prosecution Service. We are often called the CPS. We deal with crimes after the police have collected **evidence**.



With all the evidence our job is to:

- decide which crimes go to court



- get everything ready to go to court



- support victims and our witnesses.



- This leaflet tells you about support we can give to disabled victims and witnesses.

Crimes against disabled people



Disabled people have more crime done to them than other people. They are more likely to:

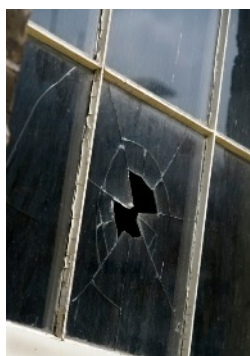
- be hurt



- have money and personal things stolen



- have their house broken into.



The crimes may be disability hate crime. This is when someone treats you badly, or is hostile to you, because you are disabled.





A hate crime can be lots of things:

- hurting you physically or sexually



- threats - someone saying they will do something bad to you



- damaging your things



- behaving in a way that makes you feel scared or worried.



Hate crimes may be done by a friend, carer or neighbour. They may use you to do something illegal for them or spend your money.



We have another EasyRead leaflet called **Taking people to court who carry out hate crime and other crimes against disabled people.**



This explains how we deal with these cases and what people can expect from us.



We include the Social Model of Disability, which says disability is caused by the way society works not a person's impairment or difference.



We look at ways disabled people can have access to justice. When this is done, disabled people can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives.



The CPS will not make judgements about a person's credibility or reliability as a witness because of an impairment and will challenge others that do.



Support for disabled victims and witnesses

Everyone is different so our support will be what each person needs.



We believe you can be a good witness. Your disability does not change this. We will argue with anyone who says your disability stops you being a good witness.



Sometimes it is obvious you are disabled. But some disabilities are hard to see such as having:

- a mental health problem



- learning disabilities



- autism.



You can decide if you want to have the support we offer.



Support is also given by Citizens Advice Witness Service. The support is free and **independent**. You can decide you want support at any time. From being told you are going to court to when you are in court. You can find out more at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/citizensadvice-witnessservice>



You can get an easy read booklet that tells you what support you can have. <http://tinyurl.com/practice-code-victims-of-crime>

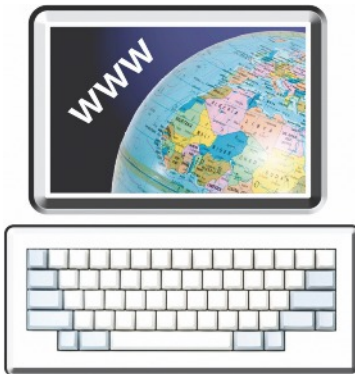


What help can I get?



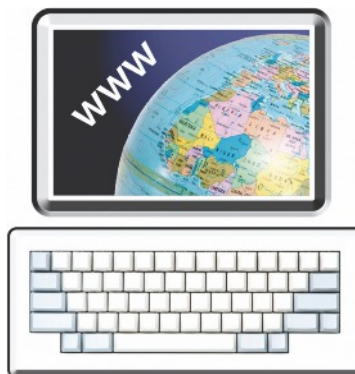
1. Reporting a crime

The police will support you when you call 999 or 101.



You can report a crime on the internet to Crime Stoppers at:

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>



You can report a hate crime on the internet to True Vision at:

<http://www.report-it.org.uk/home>

2. When the police look into the crime



The police will check with you what support you need.



You can give a victim statement. This says how the crime has affected you. You may want to say how the crime has affected you:



- physically if you have been hurt



- in the way you feel - about yourself or other people



- because it has left you with not enough money.



You may also want to say if the crime has left you:

- feeling worried what others may do to you



- worried if the **offender** will be on **bail**



- thinking about asking for **compensation**



- anything else you think is important.



The victim statement will be one of the things that the court will see. It will help staff to support you.



You may not like some of the decisions the police make. You have the right to ask them to think again.

3. After someone is charged with the crime



We will check what you need to support you in court. We will keep you up to date with what is happening.



Sometimes the crime can be confusing or very serious. Then we may need to meet you to go through the crime again. We will make a video of this meeting to show we did it the right way.



We may have to decide not to take the crime to court. Or to change what the person is charged with. We will tell you if this happens.



Citizens Advice witness service will help you to understand what will happen in the court. They can support you to visit the court before the **trial**.



You may worry the offender or someone who knows them may hurt you. Or that it may happen again to you. We can tell you what extra support you can get.

4. Going to court



Judges have a book that tells them how to be fair to everyone in court.



You will meet the prosecutor from the CPS who works in the court before you go in. We will also:

- help if you need it to read your witness statement



- you may find it difficult to speak clearly. Then you may be able to write down what you need to say



- you may have problems hearing. Then we can have sign language interpreters or lip speakers to help



- you may speak another language that is easier than English for you. Then we can have someone who speaks your language to tell the court what you are saying

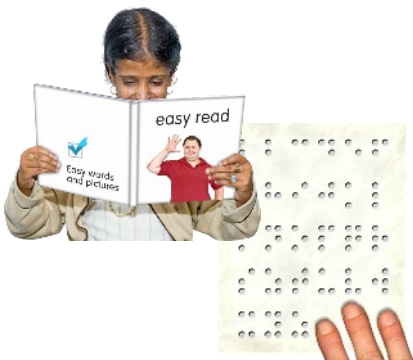


- you may need other support - we will know by then just what will help you.



The Court will:

- when it is possible let you wait in a private room



- give you things to look at in easy read or whatever is best for you. This may be braille, a tape or large print

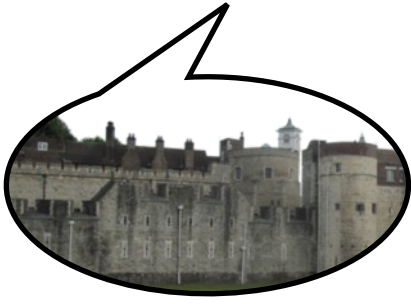


- try to get a wheelchair if it is easier for you to use one.



We will let you go home as soon as possible after you have been in court.

5. After the trial



We will tell you what happened in court and any **sentence** that was given to the offender.



The judge may tell the offender they have to pay you compensation for:



- anything you lost because of the crime



- anything damaged by them



- if you were hurt.



The National Probation Service can keep you up to date with what's happening with the offender. If they are in prison or when they will come out of prison. Please ask Citizens Advice Witness Service about this.

Special measures



Special measures are things that help you to give the best **evidence** possible in court. We can ask for special measures for you. It is up to the court to decide if you can have them.



Special measures may be:

- a screen or curtain so that you do not need to see the offender



- giving evidence in court in private without newspaper reporters or other people there



- by live video. You will be in another room and speak to a camera. You will be able to see the court people on a tv screen



- someone to support you to give your answers. This is a person chosen by the court who has special training



- interpreters helping you and the court to understand each other



- if you have ways to communicate, such as a board, using this.



How we supported a disabled victim



Nick beat up his sister Cathy. Cathy is disabled. She has problems walking and her bones break easily.



Nick shouted nasty things about his sister's disability when he was beating her up.



Cathy told us that she could not look at her brother in court. It would upset her too much.



We asked for special measures for Cathy. The court agreed she could use screens. This meant she did not need to see Nick when she gave evidence.



Nick was found guilty. He was given an 18 month jail sentence. The judge said this was a disability hate crime. He gave Nick an extra 6 months in jail because of this.



Nick was told to give compensation to his sister.



How we supported a disabled witness



Amala and her husband Mark took their son Tom to A and E. Tom had some bad injuries. He also had a broken leg from some time ago.



Amala was the only person who saw what happened. She has learning disabilities and problems saying what she is thinking.



Amala told the police Mark lost his temper because Tom kept crying. Mark hurt Tom. He had hurt Tom before as well.



She visited the court before she gave evidence and met the prosecutor from the CPS.



Amala gave evidence by a live video. Someone also explained to her the questions she was asked. This person was chosen by the court and is specially trained for this work.



This person told the court Amala found it hard to say when something happened. She could not do dates in a month. Amala could say when something was near a birthday or other special times.



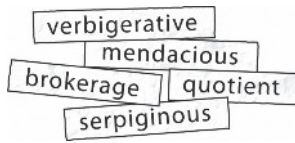
Amala felt the person understood her. She felt calmer and more confident giving evidence.



Mark was found guilty. He was given 14 years in prison.



We have changed the names of the people in these stories.



Difficult words

Bail - being allowed out of prison until you have to go back to court, if a judge thinks you will go back when you should. Sometimes you might need to go to a police station every day or stay in at night time.

Charge - when the police officially tell a person which law they think they have broken.

Compensation - money you get if you have problems or are injured and it is not your fault.

Evidence - Information that can be used to try and prove something.

Independent - someone who is separate from the service/organisation/council.

Offender - the person who did the crime.

Prosecutor - the prosecutor is a professional person with legal training. Their job is to charge people suspected of doing crimes. They work in courts make sure the courts deal with offenders in the right way.

Report - telling the police about a crime.

Sentence - the punishment for doing a crime.

Trial - when a case goes to court and the court decides if the person is guilty of the crime.

Victim - The person the crime is against.

Witness - a person who says what they have seen and what they know about a crime.

Credits



This paper has been designed and produced by the EasyRead service at Inspired Services Publishing Ltd. Ref ISL124 17. September 2017.

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