



2

An Garda Síochána
Victims Charter

2: An Garda Síochána Victims Charter

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

If you are a victim of a crime or traumatic incident, we will:

- respond quickly to your call and investigate your complaint;
- give you the name, telephone number and station of the investigating Garda and the PULSE incident number - this is a number given to your incident so that we can quickly find the details of your case;
- explain what will happen and keep you informed of the criminal investigation - this includes writing to you when we charge/summon or caution a suspect in relation to your incident; and
- tell you in writing about the Crime Victims Helpline and the other services available for victims of crime or a traumatic incident. You can access a wide range of support services through this helpline. The helpline is run by volunteers and it is independent of the Garda Síochána
Crime Victims Helpline: 1850 211 407.

When a suspect is due to appear in court we will tell you:

- whether the suspect is being held in prison ('in custody') or on bail and any conditions of the bail, such as staying away from you or your house;
- the time, date and location of the court hearing;
- the prosecution process - if you are likely to be called as a witness, we will tell you about the support you can get from voluntary organisations which support victims of crime;
- about cases where the law allows you as a victim, to give evidence to the court about the crime's impact on you;
- about court expenses; and
- the final result of the criminal trial.

If you are a visitor to Ireland

If you are a visitor to Ireland and you are the victim of a crime or a traumatic incident we will also, with your consent, refer you to the services of the Irish Tourist Assistance Service

Irish Tourist Assistance Service telephone number: 1890 365 700.

We will show special sensitivity in relation to sexual offences

- we will provide a Garda of the same gender;
- we will provide a doctor of the same gender as far as possible when asked; and
- we will give you details about any local support organisations for victims of sexual offences.

Families of murder victims or victims of other unlawful killing

Your local Garda Superintendent will keep contact directly with you and any organisation supporting victims that you have asked to help you. We will keep up contact between you, the investigating Garda and any relevant support organisation through a named Garda Family Liaison Officer from the investigation team.

Victims of domestic violence

In cases of domestic violence we have a pro-arrest policy to protect spouses or partners and your family. We will also advise you about local support services.

Older people

If you are an older person who has been a victim of crime we will continue to take all reasonable steps to protect and reassure you. We will also offer you advice about home security and your safety in the community.

Special Needs

If you have any form of disability we will take your special needs or requirements into account.

If you are not fluent in English or Irish

We will provide a free translation service so that you will receive the same quality of service as far as possible as any victim of crime.

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities

If you are a member of the gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender community we will manage your case with sensitivity. Where appropriate we will also refer you to a Gay Liaison Officer within the Garda Síochána.

Racist incidents

If you are a victim of a racist incident we will:

- accurately record the incident;
- investigate your complaint; and
- put you in contact with the Garda Ethnic Liaison Officer in your area.

Crimes committed by young people

If you are the victim of a crime committed by a young person:

- we will inform you if the person who carried out the crime is a young person;
- we will take account of any views that you, as a victim, may wish to make when a young person is being considered for the Diversion Programme; however, the decision to admit a young person to the Programme remains a decision for the Director of the Programme;
- we may invite you to be present if we are cautioning the young person;
- we may invite you to a Garda Family Conference; and
- we will uphold your interests as a victim at a Garda Family Conference, whether you are present or not.

IF WE DO NOT MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS

If you are not satisfied with our service - or if you have any questions, suggestions or feedback on any aspect of your treatment by members of the Garda Síochána please do not hesitate to contact:

Your local Garda Superintendent

Details are available at www.garda.ie or in the telephone directory (green pages) under An Garda Síochána

or

The Garda Victim Liaison Office,
An Garda Síochána,
Community Relations and Community Policing Section,
Harcourt Square,
Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 666 3880 or (01) 666 3822 or (01) 666 3882

Fax: (01) 666 3801

Email: crimevictims@garda.ie

(All are monitored during business hours)

We will respond to your query as fast as possible.

You may also refer a complaint to the:

Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission

150 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1.

LoCall: 1890 600 800

Tel: (01) 871 6727

Fax: (01) 814 7023

Email: info@gsoc.ie

Website: www.gardaombudsman.ie

THE ROLE OF THE GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

We are very aware of the special place that victims have in the Garda service and within the criminal justice system. We are committed to establishing a helpful and supportive relationship with you. Looking after your dignity, concerns and needs is a high priority for us.

Professional values such as honesty, accountability, respect and professionalism and ethical standards guide us in the performance of our duties and the delivery of our public policing services.

The Garda Síochána are dedicated to:

- protecting life and property
- detecting and preventing crime
- preserving peace,
- maintaining public safety.

We aim to be courteous, helpful, respectful and professional. If you are upset about a crime or other traumatic incident, we will respond to your needs in a caring and sensitive manner.

When you report a crime we will investigate the matter and help to bring those responsible to justice. We do this by gathering all of the evidence surrounding the incident in a fair, honest and impartial manner. Then we will do one of the following:

- for less serious crimes bring the case before the District Court in the name of the Director of Public Prosecutions where there is sufficient evidence;
- if the offender is between 10 and 17 years of age decide whether that person is suitable for the Diversion Programme; or
- send a file on our investigation to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and ask for a direction on whether a criminal prosecution should take place.

All members of the Garda Síochána will treat victims with dignity and respect - whatever your gender, race, religious beliefs, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, nationality, disability, economic circumstances, marital or family status or if you are a member of the Traveller community.

The welfare and support of victims are central to our partnership with community groups, statutory agencies and voluntary organisations.

(Edition: June, 2010)

