

## FOREWORD BY MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND LAW REFORM

This Charter is for you – who are unfortunately a victim of a crime. It sets out in clear language the service you can expect from all the main state agencies in the criminal justice area and from one of the voluntary organisations that has contact with victims. These agencies are committed at the highest level to their Charters in this document.



As Minister for Justice and Law Reform, I want the Charter to be more than just words – I want the words to be matched by real, measurable action on the ground. I want to see state and voluntary organisations provide competent, caring and efficient services for victims of crime. A competent service gives clear information, is confident to deliver support and knows when to refer a victim to another service. A caring service tries to see things from the victim's point of view, while remaining professional enough to be of help to the victim. An efficient service works together with other organisations when this serves the needs of the victim.

I am committed to improving the position of victims. I have set up a Victims of Crime Office to encourage state and voluntary organisations to provide better services to victims. I continue to provide funding to the Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime to help voluntary organisations supporting victims of crime. I very much support the work of the Victims of Crime Consultative Forum, set up by the Commission. This Forum provides a platform for victims' groups to have an input into the policy process and to work together through the sharing of good practice. I have also published the Criminal Procedure Bill, 2009, which will improve the legal situation for victims when it becomes law.

This edition of the Victims Charter and Guide to the Criminal Justice System is not the final word for victims of crime. It is a step in the right direction. I look forward to seeing updates of individual charters as organisations do their best to provide better and new services to victims, especially victims who are also witnesses in a case.

**Dermot Ahern, TD**

Minister for Justice and Law Reform

---