



Easy
Read and
Child
Friendly



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Máinnystrie O tha Laa

www.justice-ni.gov.uk

Our plan to support victims and witnesses of crime

What do you think?



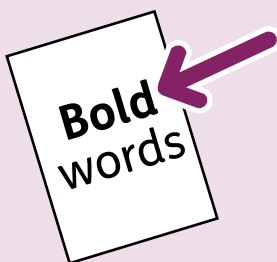
Easy Read



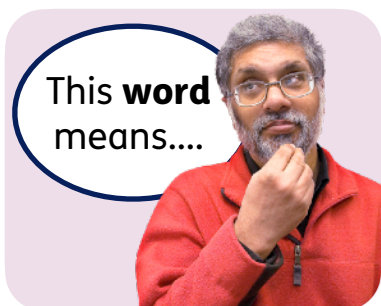
This is an Easy Read and Child Friendly version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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You can fill in a quick survey to say what you think about this Easy Read booklet:
info.easy-read-online.co.uk/easy-read-feedback-survey

About this booklet



This booklet is from the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland.

We are part of Northern Ireland's government.



We are in charge of Northern Ireland's **criminal justice system**.

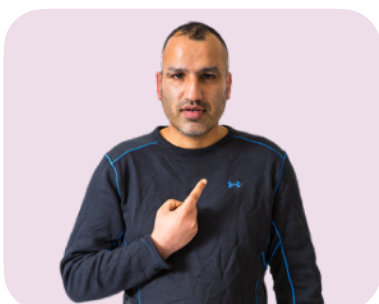
The **criminal justice system** is all the different organisations involved in dealing with people who have broken the law.



This booklet will explain our plan for how we will support **victims** and **witnesses** of crime in Northern Ireland.



A **victim** is someone who is harmed or injured because of a crime.



A **witness** is someone who saw a crime or has information about a crime.



At the end of the booklet, you can tell us what you think of our plan by answering some questions.



We will use your answers to change our plan if we need to.



If you need this booklet in a different format, like braille or large print, please email us:

dojvictimswitnesses@justice-ni.gov.uk

About the plan



The plan is for the years 2025 to 2030.

The plan was written with help from:



- **The Victim and Witness Steering Group.**

The Victim and Witness Steering Group is a group of organisations that work to improve support for victims and witnesses of crime.



- Victims and witnesses of crime and their families.



When we wrote the plan, we thought about the stories of victims and witnesses, and what they said about their needs.

When we wrote the plan, we also thought about



- How different organisations in the criminal justice system can work together to support victims and witnesses.



- The feelings of victims and witnesses.



- What has worked well for other criminal justice systems.



We call these things our **principles**.

Why do we need a plan?



We have already done a lot of work to improve support for victims and witnesses of crime.

But victims and witnesses still face some challenges, like:



- Having to wait a long time between each stage of the court case they are involved in.



- Not getting support that is suited to them.



This means we have more to learn and more to improve.

Checking our plan is fair



Before sharing our plan, we checked whether any of our ideas were unfair to different groups of people.

This is called doing an **impact assessment**.



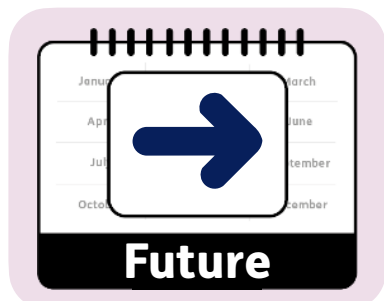
We found out that our ideas are not unfair to any groups of people.



You can find out more about our impact assessments and what we found out on our website: www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/draft-victims-and-witnesses-crime-strategy-2025-2030

The plan

Our vision



The plan includes our **vision**.

A **vision** is how we want things to be in the future.



Our vision is for people in Northern Ireland to trust the criminal justice system.

Our mission



The plan also includes our **mission**.

A **mission** is what we want to do right now to help us work towards our vision.



Our mission is to support all victims and witnesses of crime in Northern Ireland in the ways that they need.

Our goals



Goals are the things that we want to work towards.

Our plan has 5 goals:



1. **Support** - Make sure all victims and witnesses can get the support they need.



2. **Information** - Make sure information about the criminal justice system is easy to read and understand.



3. **Being involved** - Help victims and witnesses understand how the criminal justice system works.



4. **Rights and trust** - Make sure victims and witnesses get their rights and trust the criminal justice system.



5. **Children and young people** - Make sure the criminal justice system is meeting the needs of children and young people who are victims or witnesses.



We will go through each goal in more detail.

1. Support

We want:



- Victims and witnesses to get the support they need, no matter what their needs are.



- Victims and witnesses to be shown where the right support for them is and at the right times.



- Organisations in the criminal justice system to work together when supporting victims and witnesses.

We also want:



- Victims and witnesses to feel confident that if they report a crime, they will be supported.



- Victims and witnesses to trust the criminal justice system.

We will work towards this goal by:



- Providing support that is suited to each victim and witness.



- Using the money we get to help organisations support victims and witnesses.



- Helping organisations and services understand the needs of victims and witnesses.

We will work towards this goal by also:



- Making sure victims and witnesses know about all the support that they can get.



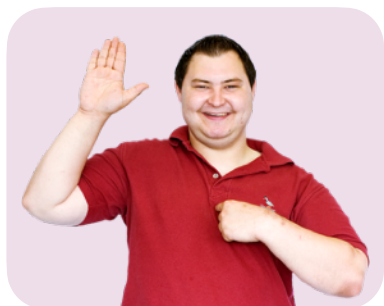
- Checking the needs of victims and witnesses at the right times.

2. Information

We want:



- Victims and witnesses to get all the information they need at the right time.



- Victims and witnesses to understand their part in the criminal justice system.



- Information that is given to victims and witnesses to be in a format that they can understand, like Easy Read or large print.



We also want members of staff at organisations in the criminal justice system to speak to victims and witnesses in the right way.

We will work towards this goal by:



- Giving victims and witnesses the information they need at the right time.



- Giving victims and witnesses the information they need in a format that suits them.



- Telling victims and witnesses about any decisions we make and why we have made these decisions.



- Asking victims and witnesses how they found working with the criminal justice system.

We will work towards this goal by also:



- Making sure victims and witnesses know how to complain if they are unhappy with how they have been treated by the criminal justice system.



- Listening to what victims and witnesses have to say in a kind way.



- Checking that our information can be understood by people with learning disabilities and children.

3. Being involved

We want:



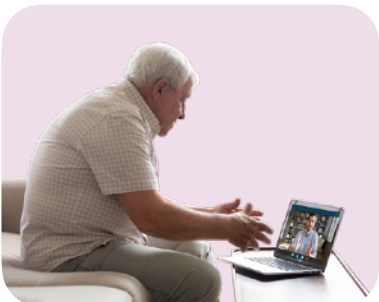
- Victims and witnesses to feel included at all stages of the court case they are involved in.



- Victims and witnesses to understand the decisions that the court makes.



- Victims and witnesses to feel safe when telling the court about the crime they were involved in.



- Victims and witnesses to be able to talk about the crime from a safe place, called a Remote Evidence Centre (REC), if they do not feel able to go to court.

We will work towards this goal by:



- Setting up an online space where victims and witnesses can easily get any information they need.



- Giving victims and witnesses information about how the courts make decisions and why they make these decisions.



- Helping victims and witnesses to have their voices heard.



- Making sure victims and witnesses can tell the court about the crime in a way that suits them.

4. Rights and trust



Rights are things that every person should have by law. Like the right to be safe and the right to be respected.

We want:



- The rights of victims and witnesses to be respected by the criminal justice system at all times.



- Organisations in the criminal justice system to follow the laws about rights.



- To listen to any issues that victims and witnesses bring to us, to help us improve the criminal justice system.

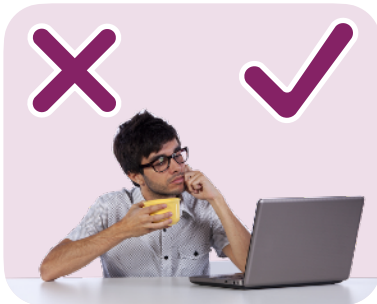
We will work towards this goal by:



- Sharing information about the rights of victims and witnesses with organisations in the criminal justice system.



- Setting up a new role for a member of staff who will be in charge of protecting the rights of victims.



- Sharing information with the public about what we are doing well and what is not working.



- Giving victims and witnesses more chances to speak up about the criminal justice system.

5. Children and young people

We want:



- Children and young people to feel confident about reporting a crime if they need to.



- Parents and carers to feel confident about reporting a crime their child is involved in if they need to.



- Children and young people who are victims or witnesses to feel safe and supported.



- Children and young people who are victims or witnesses to get the support they need quickly.



We also want children and young people who are victims or witnesses to be listened to if they have an issue.

We will work towards this goal by:



- Giving children and young people who are victims or witnesses the right support and information they need.



- Making sure children and young people who are victims or witnesses feel safe when telling the court about the crime.



- Talking to and supporting children and young people who are victims or witnesses in a way that is suitable for their age.

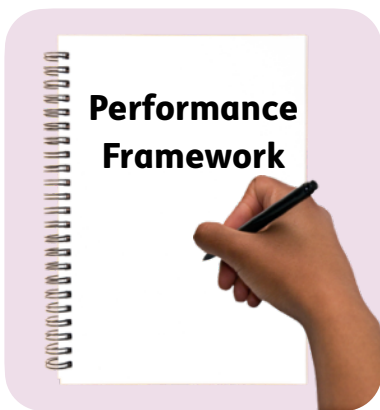


- Asking children and young people who are victims or witnesses how they found working with the criminal justice system.

Checking that the plan is working

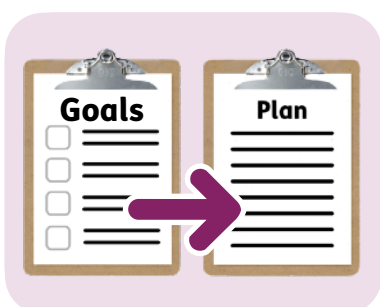


We want to make sure that the ideas in our plan really do help to support victims and witnesses of crime in Northern Ireland.



To help us check this, we will write a **Performance Framework**.

The **Performance Framework** will be a document that explains how we will check if the ideas in our plan are making a difference.



The Performance Framework will also include more detailed plans for each of the goals, like when each goal should be completed.



The Victim and Witness Steering Group will be in charge of checking the plan and making sure it is being followed.

Questions for you to answer



We would like to know what you think of our plan.



We will use your answers to change our plan if we need to.



We will follow the law when collecting and keeping your answers.



Nobody will know that your answers came from you.



Question 1: Who are you answering these questions as?

☐

A member of the public.

☐

An organisation.



If you are answering as an organisation, please tell us your organisation's name:



Please also tell us your organisation's email address:



Question 2: Do you have any comments about our plan's **vision** and **mission**?

Please include any suggestions you have for how the vision or mission could be better.



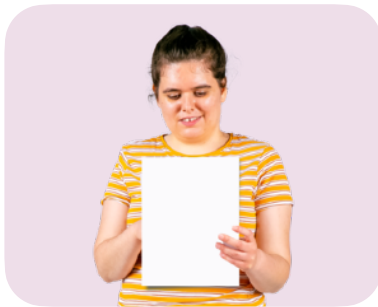
If you need a reminder, our plan's vision and mission are on page 10.

A large, empty rectangular box with a dark blue border, intended for providing comments or suggestions.



Question 3: Do you have any comments about our **principles**, and the reasons we have written a plan?

Please include any suggestions you have for how our principles could be better.



If you need a reminder, our plan's principles and the reasons why we have written our plan are on pages 7 and 8.



Question 4: Do you have any comments about our 5 main **goals**?

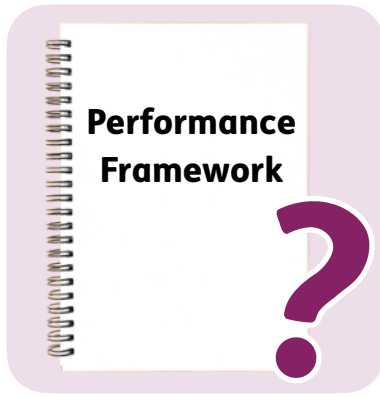
Please include:

- Whether you agree that these goals are what we should be focusing on.
- Any suggestions you have for how our goals could be better.



Question 5: Do you have any comments about the more detailed parts of our goals, like how we will work towards them?

Please include any suggestions you have for how we could work towards our goals better.



Question 6: Do you have any comments about whether a **Performance Framework** is a good way of checking if our plan is working?

Please include any suggestions you have for how we could check our plan better.



If you need a reminder, information about the Performance Framework is on page 23.



Question 7: Do you have any comments about what we have found out from our **Impact Assessments?**

Please include whether you agree with what we found out and whether you think we should do more Impact Assessments.



If you need a reminder, information about the Impact Assessments is on page 9.

Sending your answers



Please send your answers to us by 27 July 2025.

If you would like a paper copy of this document, or have any other questions, you can contact us by:



- Email:

DOJVictimsWitnesses@justice-ni.gov.uk



- Post:

Victims and Witnesses Branch
Access to Justice Directorate
Department of Justice
Knockview Building
Block 2
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SX



Or you can answer the questions on our website:

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/doj/victims-and-witnesses-strategy-2025-2030>



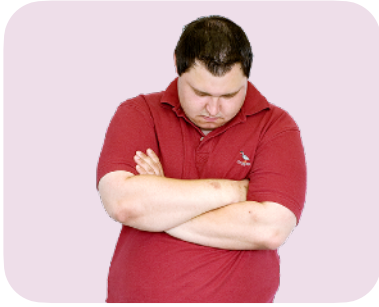
We are also going to have a lot of events to talk to people about our plan.



If you would like to go to one of these events, please email us for more information:

DOJVictimsWitnesses@justice-ni.gov.uk

Contacting us



We know that for some victims and witnesses, reading this booklet may make you feel sad or uncomfortable.

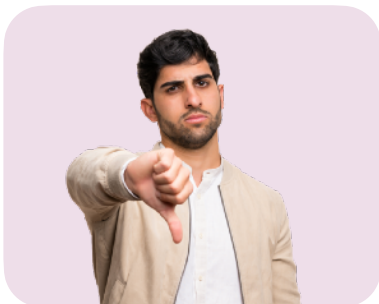


If you have been upset by reading this booklet, you can call our free support service, Victim Support NI.



You can call either of the service's numbers:

- 028 9024 3133
- 028 7137 0086



If you are unhappy about the way we have asked the questions in this booklet, you can make a complaint.

You can make a complaint by:



- Post:
Governance Unit Corporate
Engagement & Communications
Division
Justice Delivery Directorate
Department of Justice
Room B5.16
5th Floor
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SG



- Email:
governance.Unit@justice-ni.gov.uk

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