

There is help available for victims of crime, and rules about how you can expect to be treated. These are set out in the Victims Code.

You can read the Code in full at victimsinfo.govt.nz, request a printed copy on 0800 650 654 or email victimscentre@justice.govt.nz

Getting help

victimsinfo.govt.nz has information to help you understand the criminal justice system, and lists the government and other agencies that offer support to victims.

0800 650 654 – call free for information and help finding the right service for you. We can get an interpreter for you if needed.

Court victim advisor – If the case goes to court, a court victim advisor will offer you help. Any victim who would like help understanding the court process can call 0800 650 654 to be put in touch with a court victim advisor.

Principles

All people, organisations and government agencies that help you, and your family or whānau, are expected to follow these principles:

- Put your safety and the reduction of harm first.
- Show courtesy and compassion, and respect for your cultural, religious, ethnic and social needs, values and beliefs.
- Treat you with dignity and respect your privacy.
- Respond appropriately to your needs in a timely, straightforward way that shows fair treatment. Explain your options for help and answer your questions honestly and accurately so you can make an informed choice
- Give you quality services that are culturally appropriate. The people and agencies helping you should work together.
- Give you information in a way that is easy to understand and communicate with you openly, honestly and effectively.
- Make it easy for you to give feedback and make a complaint.

Victims' rights

If you have reported a crime to Police or the crime is before the courts, you also have rights under the Victims' Rights Act 2002, and other laws. People and agencies in the justice system, like Police, courts and Corrections staff, must uphold your rights.

You have the right to be told about programmes, remedies or services for your situation.

You have the right to be told within a reasonable time what is happening with your case, unless that could harm the investigation, including:

- charges filed against the defendant or young person
- reasons for not laying charges
- your role as a witness
- when and where the hearings will be
- what happened in any criminal proceedings
- a young person's progress on a plan agreed at a family group conference.

You can also ask to have this information given to someone else who can explain it to you.

You have the right to make a victim impact statement that tells the court at sentencing how the crime has affected you. You can get help to do this, and the judge may let you or someone you choose read it in court.

You have the right to tell the judge what you think about the offender being considered for name suppression. Children and young people who offend automatically get name suppression, and suppression of some other details.

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You have the right to speak Māori or use New Zealand sign language in court as a witness. If you are not a witness, you may still be able to use these languages if the judge agrees. An interpreter will be arranged.

You have the right to get any of your property back that was taken as evidence as soon as possible.

SERIOUS CRIME

If you are a victim of a serious crime, such as a sexual crime or serious assault, you have some more rights.

The Police will tell you if you have the right to say what you think about the offender being released on bail. You have the right to be told if the offender is released on bail, and about any bail conditions that would affect you or your family.

You have the right to register with Police to be told when important things happen involving the offender, such as if they have a parole hearing, reoffend during their sentence, are released from prison, escape from prison or die.

You have the right to have someone else be told this information so they can help you understand it.

You have the right to say what you think about the offender being considered for parole or any changes to their extended supervision order. This is for offenders serving more than 2 years in prison.

CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

If the offender is a child (10 to 13 years) or young person (14 to 16 years):

- You have the right to attend a family group conference and say how the crime has affected you and what you would like to see happen.
- You can take people with you for support. You can also attend by phone, give your thoughts in writing or ask someone else to stand in for you.

Complaints

ABOUT AGENCIES

You can make a complaint if you think your rights have not been met.:

- talk to the agency and use their complaints process
- call the Victims Information Line on 0800 650 654 or visit victimsinfo.govt.nz

Agencies have to respond promptly and fairly.

You can also complain to:

- Office of the Ombudsman
0800 802 602
ombudsman.parliament.nz
- Independent Police Conduct Authority
0800 503 728
ipca.govt.nz
- Privacy Commissioner
0800 803 909
privacy.org.nz

ABOUT JUDGES

Courts, judges and the New Zealand Parole Board acknowledge the rights and principles in the Code, but are not subject to it.

You can complain about a judge's conduct to the Judicial Conduct Commissioner on 0800 800 323, www.jcc.govt.nz

You can complain about the New Zealand Parole Board on 0800 727 653, info@paroleboard.govt.nz