Witness Service

Bereaved families

27 February 2026

Support for bereaved families

The Witness Service can provide support throughout the court process if you're a bereaved family member or friend of someone who has died because of a crime.

If you have been bereaved as a result of murder or manslaughter, you may have been assigned a Family Liaison Officer (FLO) by the police service.

Your FLO will work with the Witness Service to help support you through the court process, including before, during and after the trial.

The Witness Service can help you in the following ways:

- provide you with information about how the court process works
- facilitate virtual pre-trial visits (which include virtual court tours) or in-person pre-trial visits so that you can see what the court might look like before the trial takes place
- support you throughout the trial and answer any questions you may have
- give you information on other partners and agencies that may be able to provide further or specialist support.

Victim Personal Statements

Close family members of victims who have died as a result of a crime may be eligible to make a Victim Personal Statement (VPS). This is a written or recorded statement that explains to the court the impact that the crime has had on you. You can find out more about creating your statement in the links below:

- Witness Service: Victim Personal Statements
- Victim Support: Victim Personal Statements
- GOV.UK: guidance – Victim Personal Statements

Useful links

- Victim Contact Scheme – this scheme provides information for eligible victims after an offender has been convicted and sentenced.
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme – this is a government-funded scheme designed to compensate victims of violent crime
- Restorative Justice – this process can bring together those harmed by crime and those responsible for the harm. It is a voluntary process that requires consent from both parties.