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Tell us your story of Victim Support

If we've helped you after a crime, telling your story can help others understand the support we offer. Drop us a line if you'd like to share your story or give us feedback on the help we've given you.

Your name:

Your email:

Message:



Dealing with media intrusion

Crime is always in the news, which means that victims of crime can often find themselves suddenly the centre of attention for the media. Sometimes this can be helpful - for example if it helps catch criminals or helps others avoid becoming a victim. But victims can also find the attention of journalists intrusive and upsetting.

Advice for victims who get media attention

If you're a victim and get calls or visits from the media, we'd recommend that you get advice before saying anything to journalists. There are systems in place to help protect you and there are also some risks that you need to be aware of.

If it's a very serious or high profile crime, police family liaison officers will be able to give you advice on dealing with the media. You can also talk to one of our staff or volunteers to find out more. If you have a lawyer involved in your case they may also give you advice on dealing with journalists.

With some types of crime (such as rapes and sexual assaults, and crimes involving children and young people) there are legal restrictions on what the media can and can't report. You can download a guide to these reporting restrictions from the 'Society of Editors' link on the right. With every type of crime, reporters have to be careful what they report in case they say things that could affect the result of a trial in court. As a victim, you also have to be careful what you say publicly because, for example, you might say things that a court could decide made it impossible for the accused to get a fair trial. That means that you can spoil your own chances of getting justice as well as potentially getting into trouble with the court yourself.

Once a journalist has reported something you have said, it's very hard to stop it being repeated across lots of other media. So think very carefully about what you want to say, if anything. Your comments could follow you around for a long time.

Positive reasons for talking to the media

There can be positive results from talking to the media if you're a victim of crime. For example:

- It may help the police to find the person who committed the crime or to get evidence. The police will advise you if they think this is something they would like you to do. We can also give you an independent point of view to help you make a decision if you're asked to make an appeal for information or help.
- Some victims feel better about the crime when they speak to the media. It allows them to get their feelings off their chest. It also gives them an opportunity to warn other people of the risks or to draw attention to how they coped or to thank people who helped them. But remember that it can be hard to get your privacy back once you have talked to the media so things you've said in the past may be repeated again - even if your feelings have changed.

When media attention gets too much

Sometimes media attention can be intense - particularly after murders and other high profile crimes. If you're the victim, this can seriously affect your life and make it even harder to cope with the stress and shock of the crime. Some victims have had journalists or photographers outside their house for days, or endless phone calls and visitors. The recent phone hacking scandal has shown the lengths some journalists are prepared to go to to get information. But thankfully most journalists are reasonable and there are safeguards in place.

If you are getting unwanted attention from the press, you can contact the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) and explain the situation. They can issue an alert (called a *Desist Notice*) to all the main newspaper editors asking them to leave you alone. Follow the link on the right to the PCC's website where you can find their contact details and read about how *Desist Notices* have helped other people.

If you are unhappy with media coverage after it's appeared, you can also make a complaint to the PCC. There are rules about what types of complaint the PCC can deal with - again there are more details on their website.

The PCC has a helpful leaflet about dealing with the media for people who have been bereaved. There is a link on the right to download a copy.

When it comes to radio and television, the organisation that deals with complaints is called Ofcom. Follow the link on the right to find out more about what they do and how you can make a complaint through them if you are unhappy with the way you have been treated by broadcasters. Just like the PCC, Ofcom has rules about the types of complaints they will deal with - there are more details about this on their website.

Ofcom also has a 24-hour number you can call - 07659 152656 - to report harassment by radio or television journalists. When you call this number you will be directed to the broadcaster the journalist works for. However the decision over whether to stop the journalists bothering you rests with the individual broadcasters, not Ofcom.



Related links:

- » [Society of Editors: Reporting restrictions in the Crown Court](#)
- » [Press Complaints Commission](#)
- » [PCC: 'Media attention following a death' leaflet](#)
- » [Ofcom: How to complain](#)

Helping us help more victims

If you've had help from Victim Support and the Witness Service, and found it useful, you might want to help us by speaking to the media to let other victims and witnesses know about the support we give. Our media team will help you deal with journalists and will respect any wishes you have (such as staying anonymous). Use the form on the left to send them a message if you'd like to find out more.

Registered charity number: 298028

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