



Ministry
of Justice

After court

Expenses and your property.

Appeals.

Notification requirements for sex offenders.

Parole.

Victim Contact Scheme.

If you are a victim of rape or sexual assault, this guide will help you to understand what might happen after a trial.

You can access a **glossary** for more information on the terms used in this guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guides-for-victims-of-rape-and-sexual-assault/glossary-of-terms>).

Going through a trial can be difficult and it's natural to need time and help to process what has happened. Support is still available after court. If you have been receiving help from an ISVA, they will ensure that you have the support you need. You can access support at any time, and you can find out about the organisations who can help in our **support guide** (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guides-for-victims-of-rape-and-sexual-assault>).

Expenses and your property

If you attended court to give evidence or a Victim Personal Statement, you may be able to claim expenses (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/264625/victims-vps-guidance.pdf). More information on what you may be entitled to and how to claim can be found on the expenses for going to court webpage on GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/going-to-court-victim-witness/expenses-for-going-to-court>).

The police may have taken some of your belongings to use as evidence. They should return them to you as soon as they're no longer needed. The police will be able to help if you have any questions about the return of your property.

Appeals

If you think sentence was too lenient

You can ask for someone's Crown Court sentence to be reviewed if you think it's too lenient. You can do this through the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme. This scheme allows **you or any member of the public to challenge the sentence** the judge gave. To do this, you'll need to contact the Attorney General's Office:

- email uls.referrals@attorneygeneral.gov.uk
- call 020 7271 2492

If you want to challenge the sentence, you should contact the Attorney General's Office as soon as possible after the sentence is passed. This is because if the Attorney General or Solicitor General thinks the sentence meets the standards of being 'unduly lenient', and the offence falls within the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme, they must apply to the Court of Appeal within 28 days of a sentence being handed down. If the Court of Appeal agrees that the sentence meets the standard of being 'unduly lenient', it may increase the sentence. The CPS website has more information about unduly lenient sentences (<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/unduly-lenient-sentences>).

The person who committed the offence(s) against you can apply for permission to appeal their sentence

The offender can apply for permission to appeal against their conviction or sentence. How they appeal will depend on which court they were sentenced in.

Your Witness Care Officer will tell you if the offender appeals against their conviction or sentence.

More information can be found here:

Appeal a magistrates' court decision: What you can appeal (<https://www.gov.uk/appeal-magistrates-court-decision>)

Ask for a Crown Court sentence to be reviewed (<https://www.gov.uk/ask-crown-court-sentence-review>)

Notification requirements for sex offenders

People convicted of sexual offences will be made subject to notification requirements.

This means they must provide information about themselves to the police at least once a year. They also must tell the police about any foreign travel or if they live in the same household as any children under 18. This is commonly called being on the sex offenders register. It allows the police to manage risks posed by sex offenders.

You have the right to certain information about this process. You can read more about these rights in Right 11 of the Victims' Code (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974376/victims-code-2020.pdf).

Parole

When the offender is released from prison

You might decide you will feel safer if you know what is happening to the offender once they have been found guilty. You can contact the HM Prison and Probation Service Victims Helpline if you are worried about the offender being released from prison (<https://www.gov.uk/get-support-as-a-victim-of-crime>).

Parole is when an offender is released from prison before the end of their sentence. If this happens, they will be kept under supervision, known as probation. More information about the parole scheme is available online (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-parole-boards-commitment-to-victims-of-crime>).

Victim Contact Scheme

If the offender was sentenced to 12 months or more in prison, you'll be asked if you want to join the Victim Contact Scheme.

If you join the scheme, a Victim Liaison Officer will contact you. They will ask you how you would like to be kept informed.

They can:

- give you information about key stages in the offender's sentence, like whether they are applying for release
- give you the opportunity to express your views about what should happen once they are released (such as a requirement not to contact you or come to a particular area)
- tell you what conditions they will be subject to if they relate to you or your family

If the Parole Board decides it is safe to release an offender, you can receive this information through the Victim Contact Scheme.

If you decide not to join at the time or you were not asked, you can join later by emailing the Victim Contact Scheme at vcsenquiries@justice.gov.uk.

As a victim, you may submit a request to the Secretary of State for Justice to ask the Parole Board to reconsider their decision. Whatever the Secretary of State decides, you will receive a letter informing of you of that decision.



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