

Information for the bereaved

Murder or manslaughter

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



I Introduction

How this pack can help	1
Police Family Liaison Officers	2
What do the FLOs do during the investigation?	2
What will happen now?	3

How this pack can help

We are sorry to hear that someone close to you has died. We know that losing someone can be a distressing and difficult experience – especially if their death was sudden and unexpected.

You might find this pack helpful at this difficult time. It contains information about decisions and arrangements you may need to make, like deciding whether you would like to view the deceased person or how to arrange a funeral.

It also explains how the criminal justice system works and what the police, the coroner and the courts will do now.

To help you organise your information, we have included blank sheets where you can make your own notes or write down contact details of people you need to keep in touch with. At the back of this pack, you will find the contact details of various organisations and support groups that may be able to help you to get through this difficult time.

If you have any personal concerns about the information in this pack, the Police Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) will be able to help you. Write down any questions you want to ask the FLOs so that you do not forget anything important when you meet them.

The information in this pack is also available online on the CJSONline website: www.cjsonline.gov.uk

Police Family Liaison Officers

Police Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) are specially trained police investigators who work with a team to give you and your family information about the investigation.

For a definition of what we mean by family or family member, see the glossary in section 7 Terms explained.

The FLOs will maintain contact with you during the investigation. If, for some reason, the FLOs need to leave your case, they will discuss this with you.

What do the FLOs do during the investigation?

The primary role of the FLOs is to develop a two-way flow of information between family and friends and the investigation team.

The FLOs can also help you in various ways. They will:

- answer any questions that you may have about the ongoing investigation
- give you contact details of organisations that can offer emotional support or practical advice

What will happen now?

What will happen now?

Meeting the FLOs	Viewing the deceased person	Notifying people about the death	Arranging a funeral	The Will and the estate	The inquest	The police investigation	Prosecuting a case	Making a VPS	The court process
<p>The Police Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) will keep you and your family updated about the investigation and provide a two-way flow between you and the investigation team.</p> <p>For more details about FLOs, see page 2.</p>	<p>Viewing the deceased person may be an important step in coming to terms with the death. The police may also ask you to view the person to help with identification.</p> <p>For more information about this, see page 8.</p>	<p>When someone dies, there are people and organisations that need to be told – such as employers and mortgage providers.</p> <p>For more information about who you may need to contact, see page 12.</p>	<p>Before making any funeral arrangements, consider any wishes left in the Will – or those of bereaved family members and friends.</p> <p>For more information about arranging a funeral, see page 19.</p>	<p>It is important to find out if the person who died left a Will as the Will explains what should happen to their money, property and possessions.</p> <p>For more information about dealing with the Will, see page 26.</p>	<p>When the cause of a death is unknown, violent or unnatural, an inquest is held to determine the cause and the circumstances of the death.</p> <p>For more information about what happens at an inquest, see page 35.</p>	<p>During the investigation, the police will gather all the evidence they need to prosecute.</p> <p>The FLOs will keep you informed about the investigation.</p> <p>For more information about what happens during an investigation, see page 45.</p>	<p>When the investigation has been completed, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) will decide whether there is enough evidence to charge and prosecute a defendant.</p> <p>For more information about prosecuting, see page 49.</p>	<p>The Victim Personal Statement (VPS) is your chance to tell the court how the crime has affected you in, for example, an emotional, physical, medical or financial way.</p> <p>For more information about the VPS, see page 57.</p>	<p>To find out what happens during a trial, see page 61.</p> <p>For information about how the court passes a sentence, see page 70.</p> <p>To find out how prisoners may be released, see page 83.</p>

2 Immediately after the death

What you need to know straight away	5
Identifying and viewing the deceased person	6
Giving consent for donating tissues and organs	8
Who should be notified about the death	10
Obtaining personal possessions of the deceased person	12
Coping with the media	13
Stopping unwanted mail addressed to the deceased person	16
The funeral	17
Arranging the funeral	18
Paying for the funeral	21
Announcing the funeral	23
The Will, the estate and other payments	24
What is the personal representative responsible for?	25
If you are the personal representative	27
If there is a Will	27
If the deceased person did not leave a Will	27
Paying debts and expenses	29
Paying or claiming tax	29
Claiming arrears of benefit	31

What you need to know straight away

This section contains information about decisions you may need to make straight away. It is important that you look through these pages first, and read the information that is relevant to you. A Police Family Liaison Officer (FLO) will talk you through this section and explain what you need to know.

Identifying and viewing the deceased person

When someone has died, the police may ask a family member or close friend to identify the person or their belongings and then confirm their identity by signing a statement.

If you are not asked to identify the body, you can still choose to view the deceased person. This can be a difficult decision, especially if the person died in violent circumstances.

The FLOs will be able to give you guidance and answer your questions, but the decision will be up to you.

Identifying the deceased person

Your involvement in identifying the deceased person is important for the police to confirm the person's identity. Identification normally takes place at a hospital or in a mortuary. However, it can sometimes take place at the scene of the death, depending on the circumstances.

If you are asked to make the identification, the FLOs will help you arrange the visit and answer any questions or concerns you have.

Viewing the deceased person

Even if you are not asked to identify the deceased person, you may still want to view them. This can be the first step towards coming to terms with your bereavement. Often people who do not see the body find it harder to accept that the person has died.

It is normal that you may feel worried or frightened about the viewing. You may not wish to have your last memory of them lying in a mortuary, or you may be worried about how they will look because of the circumstances of their death.

The FLOs will give you details of what the experience can be like to prepare you for the viewing. Sometimes there are photographs available of the person that can be shown to you to give you an idea of what happened.

Viewing the deceased person after a post mortem

Sometimes, you may not be able to view the person until a post-mortem examination has been carried out. This is because when the police are investigating the circumstances of the death, a lot of evidence that may help to convict a suspect is found on the clothes and the body. In these cases, you will not be able to touch – or even view – the person until after the post mortem.

An FLO will be able to explain this further:

For more information about the post-mortem examination, see pages 35–40.

Giving consent for donating tissues and organs

Sometimes it is possible to use organs and body tissues from someone who has died to help others live. If the deceased person carried a donor card or was on the NHS Organ Donor Register, someone close to them will be asked if they agree to donation. If the deceased person had not indicated their consent (or refusal) to donate their organs, the next of kin may give their consent to donate.

What organs and tissues can be transplanted?

Whether organs can be transplanted depends on how and where the person died. Internal organs may be donated if the person died in hospital when on a life support machine, but not if they died at the scene of the crime. However, corneas, heart valves and skin or bone may be donated wherever the person died.

If the cause of death is suspicious and has been referred to the coroner, removing organs could affect important evidence – so the coroner will then have to agree before any organs can be removed.

Who can give consent?

If the person did not consent or refuse to donate their organs, the list of who to contact for obtaining consent to donate is specified in the Human Tissue Act 2004. The list follows this order:

- spouse or partner (including civil or same sex partner)
- parent or child
- brother or sister
- grandparent or grandchild
- niece or nephew
- stepfather or stepmother
- half-brother or half-sister
- long-standing friend.

Where can I find more information?

If you have not been asked about organ or tissue donation and want to find out if it is possible, speak to an FLO.

For more information about donation and transplantation, go to the Human Tissue Authority's website at www.hta.gov.uk.

You can also contact the Organ Donor Helpline on 0845 60 60 400 – their lines are open 24 hours. Or go online at www.uktransplant.org.uk

Who should be notified about the death

When someone dies, there are people and organisations that need to be told. This includes organisations like the tax office or the deceased person's bank or building society. If you were the spouse or partner of the deceased person, the following might apply to you as well.

These organisations may need to be informed of the death:

- The deceased person's and your own employer
If you are employed, you may be entitled to immediate bereavement leave or be given permission to take your holiday entitlement immediately. Some employers and trade unions also have benevolent funds that provide support for families of employees.
- A nursery, school, college or university that the deceased was attending when they died – or that their children attend
Teachers and lecturers can often provide valuable support.
- Life insurance and pension schemes
- Bank or building society
- Mortgage provider, housing association, council housing office or landlord
- Utility providers
- Benefit providers
If the person who died was receiving a state retirement pension or any welfare benefits, you should inform The Pension Service or the office that dealt with their benefits.

If you were receiving a carer's allowance for the deceased, you should inform the relevant agency. The registrar will send you a form to send back together with a copy of the death certificate and any advice booklets. Please make sure that you keep a note of any reference numbers as you may need them later.

- The tax office, HM Revenue & Customs
- Either the Passport Office if the deceased person was a British national, or the relevant embassy or high commission if the deceased was a foreign national
- If they had a driving licence, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)
- The deceased person's vehicle insurance provider
If you were insured as a named driver on the deceased person's policy, you will now not be legally insured to drive the vehicle.
- The Bereavement Register to cancel any unwanted post addressed to the deceased
For more information about the Bereavement Register, go to page 18.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive. There may be other organisations that will need to be informed depending on the deceased person's circumstances.

You should also think about informing relatives and friends about the bereavement as soon as possible.

If you do not want to tell these organisations or people yourself, you can ask someone to do it on your behalf.

Obtaining personal possessions of the deceased person

Sometimes, the police or hospital staff may keep the deceased person's personal belongings. If the personal belongings are being used as evidence, it may be a significant time before they can be returned to you.

In some cases, it may be possible for the police to photograph or copy the item before they return the original to you. You may then be asked to keep the item safe and secure in case the prosecution or defence team may need to use it in the future. This depends on the type of item, its condition, or the weight of evidence it gives the prosecution case.

An FLO will be able to give you specific advice about the deceased person's personal possessions relating to your particular case.

Coping with the media

Sometimes, the media can take an interest in the deceased person, their family and friends. You may find the media intrusions difficult to cope with – but the media can play an important role in the investigation and, to do so, they need your co-operation.

FLOs will help you deal with the media, and will in appropriate circumstances introduce you to the Police Press Officer, who can advise you before you speak to the media. If you do not want to speak to the media, you should ask the FLOs to arrange for a suitable person (usually a Police Press Officer or Senior Investigating Officer) to talk to the media or read a statement on your behalf.

Newspapers often want pictures of those who died or members of their family, and they will sometimes go to considerable lengths to get one. The FLOs may ask you to choose a photograph that you are prepared to share with the media. The FLOs will arrange for copies to be made and given out to the press.

If you find the media too intrusive

You may not want to speak to the media and find their interest intrusive. If you are being subjected to too much attention, you should tell the FLOs. They will try to reduce the level of intrusion.

If you are unhappy about the media reporting and want to complain

Journalists, reporters and broadcasters have to deal sensitively with those involved at all times. If they do not, you have grounds to complain.

If you are unhappy about newspaper reporting

If you are unhappy about a newspaper's reporting, it may be possible to persuade the editor of the newspaper to withdraw a comment.

You can also make a complaint to the **Press Complaints Commission (PCC)**. They are responsible for making sure that newspapers abide by the industry's Code of Practice. The code covers issues relating to privacy, harassment and intrusion into grief. If you feel that the actions of a reporter may have breached the code, you should complain to the PCC as soon as possible.

You can get a copy of the Code of Practice and details of how to complain from the PCC.

Call: 020 7831 0022

Go to: www.pcc.org.uk

If you are unhappy with the content of broadcast media

If you are unhappy about the way a broadcaster (for example, a TV or radio reporter) has dealt with your case, you can make a complaint to the **Office of Communications (Ofcom)** – the regulatory body for media broadcasts.

Write to:

Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA

Call: 0300 123 3333 or 020 7981 3040
(in Welsh: 020 7981 3042)

Textphone: 0300 123 2024 or 020 7981 3043

Please note that the textphone numbers only work with special equipment used by people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Go to: www.ofcom.org.uk and click on 'How to complain'.

Stopping unwanted mail addressed to the deceased person

The Bereavement Register is a free service that helps stop direct mail being sent to the deceased – reducing the distress caused to you and your relatives.

Receiving mail for the deceased person can not only be upsetting, but it can also cause anguish if fraudsters steal the deceased's personal details.

How do I register?

To reduce direct mail sent to someone who has died, fill in the form enclosed with this pack. Alternatively register online at: www.the-bereavement-register.org.uk

The funeral

Having a funeral is an important step in coping with grief. You may need some time to think through what kind of funeral would be suitable. Find out whether the deceased person left any instructions, or if friends and relatives have any wishes.

If there is an inquest into the death, the funeral cannot take place until the coroner has given their permission. Sometimes the coroner will let the funeral go ahead before the inquest is completed. If not, the coroner's team will do everything they can to minimise the delay.

To find out more about the inquest and the coroner, go to section 3 The inquest.

Arranging the funeral

Before you start any funeral arrangements, you will need to consider any instructions left in a Will or a pre-paid funeral plan.

If the deceased person named an executor in their Will, this person will be responsible for arranging the funeral. If the deceased did not leave any wishes, the next of kin and other members of the family will decide what type of funeral is best.

Here are some questions that you may wish to consider:

- What kind of funeral do you think the deceased person would have preferred?
- What kind of funeral would you, the family or friends prefer?
- Where will the funeral take place? Somewhere locally or overseas?
- Will it be a burial or cremation?
- Should it be a religious or humanist service?
- Should it be a quiet family gathering or an elaborate ceremony?
- Would you like mourners to send flowers or donations to charity?

Who can help me arrange it?

Most people ask someone to help them with making the funeral arrangements, but you can also choose to do it yourself.

If the funeral is taking place locally

If the funeral will take place locally, most people appoint a funeral director to help. Choose one that a friend or a religious adviser recommends, or who has a good reputation locally.

A funeral director will:

- take control of all arrangements
- arrange a burial or a cremation
- provide a suitable coffin
- care for the deceased person at their own premises before the funeral
- provide a hearse to take the coffin to the cemetery or the crematorium.

They can also help you decide about viewing the deceased person, advise about the time and place of the funeral and, if you wish, place an announcement in the newspaper:

Before choosing a funeral director, ask for an estimate and consider asking for quotes from different firms so that you can compare costs. Make sure you choose a funeral director who belongs to one of the trade associations – that way they will have to follow certain codes of practice. The three trade associations are:

- The National Association of Funeral Directors
- The National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors
- The Funeral Standards Council.

If you are arranging it yourself

If you prefer to make the arrangements yourself, the **Natural Death Centre** will be able to advise you.

Call: 0871 288 2098

Go to: www.naturaldeath.org.uk

If the funeral is taking place abroad

If the funeral will take place in another country, you have to ask the coroner for permission to take the body of the deceased person abroad. For advice about repatriating the deceased person to another country, a funeral director or any of the trade associations can refer you to international repatriation specialists. They are familiar with relevant procedures and will be able to advise you.

Always ask for an estimate, and make sure that this estimate includes:

- a suitable coffin
- collection and preparation of the deceased person
- documentation
- the cost of flying the body of the deceased person overseas.

For more advice, contact your local coroner's office.

Paying for the funeral

Before making any definite arrangements, make sure that you think about the cost of the funeral and where the money will come from.

- If the deceased person had funds in a bank or building society account, the funeral costs should be paid from that account.

The bank or building society may agree to pay for the funeral directly from the deceased person's account.

Otherwise, your bank or building society may be able to help you until a probate is granted.

You can find out more about a probate in section 2

The Will, the estate and other payments.

- If the deceased person was employed, you could ask the employer if any death benefit or wages are due.
- If the deceased person had an occupational or personal pension scheme, this may provide a lump sum towards funeral costs.
- Find out if there is a pre-paid funeral plan or an insurance policy.

Getting help with the costs of a funeral

If there is no money to pay for the funeral, the local council can arrange and pay for a simple local funeral. This will be a dignified cremation or burial. If the person died in hospital, the hospital may also be able to help.

If you cannot afford a funeral, talk to the local council or hospital as soon as possible.

If you are not able to pay for the funeral bill when you receive it, speak to your local Citizens Advice Bureau as soon as you can.

Go to: www.citizensadvice.org.uk to find contact details for your local Citizens Advice Bureau

Help from the Social Fund

If the deceased person did not have any funds, and you are claiming benefits (such as Income Support, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit or Disabled Person's Tax Credit), you may be able to apply for a funeral payment from the Social Fund to cover the cost of a simple, respectful funeral.

To apply, contact the Department for Work and Pensions and ask for the SF200 form. Remember that a funeral payment must be claimed within three months of the date of the funeral.

For more information about the Social Fund payment, speak to your funeral director, your local Jobcentre Plus office or your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

Help from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (CICS) may also refund the cost of reasonable funeral expenses – but not until any criminal proceedings are complete. If you are arranging the funeral, make sure that you keep all the receipts for funeral expenses to include with your claim.

For more information about the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, see section 6. You can also call Victim Support on 0845 30 30 900 for more information.

Announcing the funeral

You may want to put an announcement about the funeral in a national or local newspaper. This could include your wishes about flowers or donations to charity. To place an announcement, call the classified advertisement department of the newspaper.

If you do not want to publish your personal or address details, you may prefer to ask your funeral director to help.

The Will, the estate and other payments

Regardless of where the death occurred, it is important to find out if the person who died left a Will. The Will says what should happen to the money, property and possessions (known as the estate) of the person who has died.

The person dealing with the Will and the estate – the personal representative – is responsible for making sure that what is specified in the Will is carried out.

If you have been named as the personal representative, make sure that you read all of this section. It contains useful information on how you deal with the Will and the estate.

If you are not the personal representative, you only need to read the following two pages.

The personal representative is sometimes referred to as the executor or the administrator:

If the Will specifies a personal representative, they are called the executor:

If there is no executor named or if there is no Will, they are referred to as the administrator. The administrator is normally the next of kin.

What is the personal representative responsible for?

The main tasks of the personal representative are to:

- gather information about the assets in the estate
- receive and deal with any payments for the deceased person
- pay any debts or expenses
- discontinue any utilities and pay any outstanding bills
- explain to relatives who is going to get what and how much under the Will
- administrate and share out the estate following the instructions left in the Will.

If there is no Will, the personal representative has to follow the instructions given by the next of kin.

If you were supported financially by the deceased person

If you were supported financially by the deceased person immediately before their death, you can apply for a share of the estate – whether you were related or not. This needs to be done within six months of the date that a probate or letters of administration are taken out. However, the court can allow later applications in special circumstances. Make sure that you contact a solicitor for legal advice before you apply.

If you were sharing possessions with the deceased person, make sure that you get legal advice before these goods are taken away. For example, hire purchase goods that were bought in the name of the deceased person (such as furniture or a car that was bought on a finance agreement) may not be returned after a third of the purchase price has been paid – unless the seller gets a court order.

If you are the partner of the deceased person and your partner left a debt, you may need to check with an advice centre or a solicitor about your liability for the debt.

If you are the personal representative If there is a Will

If you are named as a personal representative in the deceased person's Will, you are responsible for making sure that any wishes specified in the Will are carried out. You are also responsible for paying any debts, taxes and expenses, including any funeral expenses. These payments should be taken from the estate – not from your own income or savings.

When you have made sure that all debts, taxes and payments have been paid, you can share out the rest of the estate, following the instructions left in the Will.

Please note that, in most countries, a marriage or a registration of civil partnership will cancel the instructions left in the Will. A solicitor will be able to offer you legal advice based on your situation.

If the deceased person did not leave a Will

If the person who died did not leave a Will but had money or property, you need to apply for a probate (or the legal authority) to administer the estate.

However, if the whole estate comes to less than £5,000, you may be able to share it out without applying for a probate. Make sure that you contact a solicitor for legal advice before you apply.

Applying for a probate

To apply for a probate, you need to contact the Probate Registry in your area. They will be able to give you advice and send you the forms you need. Even though you can apply for a probate yourself, you may wish to do this through a solicitor as they will be able to give you advice and apply on your behalf.

To find your local Probate Registry, call the Probate and Inheritance Tax Helpline on 0845 30 20 900.

Distributing the estate

If you are given authority to act as an administrator and have made all the necessary payments, you will then be able to distribute anything left of the estate. You should share out the estate according to rules that consider the rights of a surviving spouse or civil partner, children, parents and other close blood relatives. A solicitor can give you legal advice on this.

If there are no entitled blood relatives

If there is no Will and no entitled blood relatives, the Crown has a right to the whole of the estate.

Write to:

The Treasury Solicitor's Department (BV)
1 Kemble Street
London WC2B 4TS

Paying debts and expenses

Normally any debts and expenses – including funeral expenses – are paid out of the estate of the person who has died.

As a personal representative, you are responsible for paying all the debts of the estate to any creditor (that is the people that the person who has died owes money to). To inform any unknown creditors of the person's death, it is a good idea to place a formal advertisement in a local newspaper. They then have two months to make any claims. If you do not advertise, you may be faced with personally paying the claims made after the money has been shared out.

Also make sure that you inform any known creditors that you are the deceased person's personal representative – such as the home phone provider; and any company that the deceased had a credit, hire purchase or rental agreement with, such as their gas or water supplier.

Examples of debt owed at the date of death could be National Insurance contributions or an overpayment of Income Support. If these are not paid, it may affect any benefits of the surviving spouse.

Paying or claiming tax

If the person who died was employed, self-employed or paying tax on income from investments, you need to tell the relevant tax office (HM Revenue & Customs) about the death as soon as possible. This will enable the tax office to settle the deceased person's tax affairs, and inform you if you need to pay some more tax or claim a repayment. Which particular tax office you should contact depends on the circumstances.

- If the person who died was an employee or had a pension from a former employer, contact the pay section of the employer or the pension organisation to get details of the deceased person's tax office.
- If the person who died was self-employed, contact the tax office nearest to the place of business.
- If the person who died was unemployed or retired without a pension from a former employer, contact the tax office nearest to the home address.

Find out more by contacting your local HM Revenue & Customs office.

Claiming arrears of benefit

As a personal representative, you can claim any arrears of benefits that are still owing to the person who died. This is because there may be money due if the deceased person was receiving or had recently claimed a benefit. If the claim was made just before the death, this claim may still be proceeded with.

How do I make a claim?

To claim any benefit arrears, contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for an application form. Please note that arrears may sometimes be paid back without the need to claim.

If the person who has died was awaiting the outcome of an appeal against a decision about a benefit, or you think they may have been eligible for a benefit but did not make a claim, you should ask DWP for more information as soon as you can. You may be able to act on their behalf and arrears of benefit may be payable to you.

Cancelling pensions and benefits

If the person who died was receiving a pension or another type of benefit, such as Income Support, you should tell the DWP office about the death as soon as possible.

3 The criminal justice process

The inquest	33
Understanding the role of the coroner and the coroner's officers	35
Understanding the purpose of a post-mortem examination	36
Understanding what happens at the inquest	39
What happens after the inquest?	42
The police investigation and prosecution	43
Understanding the investigation process	44
Understanding the reasons for charging and prosecuting	47
Knowing your rights as a witness or victim of crime	48
Meeting the Crown Prosecution Service	52
Making a Victim Personal Statement	55
Prosecuting your case privately	58
The court	59
Going to a magistrates' court	61
Going to Crown Court	63
Knowing the standards of service you can expect at court	67
The sentence	68
Understanding what happens before sentencing	69
Knowing about different types of sentences	70
Appealing against a verdict, sentence or tariff	75
After the sentence has been passed	81
Being contacted by the probation services	82
Speaking to the Prison Service Victim Helpline	85
Putting your views forward to the Parole Board	86

The inquest

Whenever the cause of someone's death is unknown, violent or unnatural, there will be a legal inquiry into the death. This is known as an inquest.

The inquest is held in public by an experienced and independent lawyer or doctor – known as a coroner – who will determine the cause and the circumstances of the death. The coroner's verdict is normally based on a detailed examination of the body called a post-mortem examination.

Can the inquest delay the funeral?

A person's death cannot be registered until the inquest (if one is required) is completed. As a result, a death certificate cannot be issued and the body cannot be removed until this time. After the inquest, the coroner decides when the body can be released for a funeral.

Coroners know the distress this can cause, so they do their best to keep this delay as short as possible. If no one is arrested and charged in connection with the death within a reasonable time, the coroner may arrange for a second post-mortem examination to be carried out by a different doctor so that the funeral can go ahead.

They may also issue an interim death certificate so that you can start dealing with the deceased person's estate.

Will the inquest lead to a sentence?

It is important to remember that an inquest does not set out to find anyone to blame for the death. If it becomes clear to the coroner – when they carry out their investigations before the actual inquest – that the death happened because of an unlawful killing, the coroner will immediately contact the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). However, if the CPS decides not to bring charges, the coroner will hold a full inquest.

Understanding the role of the coroner and the coroner's officers

A coroner is an experienced doctor or lawyer who has been appointed by a local authority to investigate sudden, unknown, unexplained or violent deaths in their area (even if the person did not die in their local area). Only a coroner can order an inquest, so you or a relative of the deceased cannot insist on one.

A coroner is completely independent of the local authority, the police and the CPS. Their conclusion and verdict depend entirely on the facts they hear at the inquest.

The coroner's staff are known as the coroner's officers. Their job is to work with you and other members of bereaved families, the police, doctors and funeral directors. If you have any questions, you can ask to talk to the coroner's officer at any time.

To contact the coroner's officer, speak to the Police Family Liaison Officers (FLOs).

Understanding the purpose of a post-mortem examination

Shortly after the person has died, the coroner will arrange for a post-mortem examination (also known as an autopsy) to determine the cause of death. This is a medical examination carried out by a qualified pathologist who will investigate all possible causes of death.

The coroner can order a post mortem without your permission, but they will normally give you notice of where and when it is taking place – unless it has to happen very urgently.

Can I be present at the post mortem?

You can ask to be represented by a doctor at the examination, but you cannot attend it yourself unless you are a qualified doctor.

What happens during the post mortem?

Many post-mortem examinations involve taking small tissue samples – an important tool to enable the pathologist to reach a diagnosis. The pathologist may also have to remove and keep organs for further tests. You will always be told when an organ is taken away – unless you prefer not to be told.

What happens to the organs or tissues after the post mortem?

When the coroner is certain of the cause of death and can confirm that no further examinations are needed, the organs or tissues are not normally returned. However, you may ask the coroner to return them to you for the funeral.

If an organ has to be kept until after the funeral has taken place, you can choose how you want the organ to be handled when it is released – unless you prefer not to be consulted. You may, for example, want to have another ceremony or reunite the organs with the body in a separate casket. Talk to your funeral director for advice on this.

You can also consent for the organs, tissue blocks and slides to be kept for future use within research or medical training. This could be of benefit to many other people and will also help surgeons deal with difficult cases in the future.

What happens with the findings from the post mortem?

After a post-mortem examination has taken place, the pathologist will write a report giving details of the post mortem and, in the majority of cases, establish the cause of death. This will form the basis for the coroner's verdict.

If you would like a copy of the report, speak to the coroner's office. The report is normally available to the next of kin – although you may have to pay for it. You might find it more helpful to ask your doctor or the FLOs to talk to the coroner for you.

Can I ask for a second post mortem to take place?

If you are not happy with the results of the first post-mortem examination, the coroner may allow more than one post mortem to take place. Please be aware that you will have to pay for this and that it can cost a lot of money.

Another person who may ask for a second post mortem is the person who is charged with an offence connected with the death. If this happens, you should be prepared for a delay.

Understanding what happens at the inquest

If you are a close relative of the person who died or if you are the executor of the person's estate, you will be given details of when the inquest is taking place. You do not have to attend the inquest unless you are called as a witness. However, many choose to do so. Although inquests are distressing, families often want to know how their loved one died.

It may be a good idea to visit the courtroom and familiarise yourself with it before the inquest. Speak to the FLOs or the coroner's officer if you would like to do this.

Who will attend the inquest?

These people will be at the inquest:

- the coroner
- witnesses (either summoned or voluntary)
- the police
- legal, insurance and press representatives
- anyone from the public who wishes to attend.

Most inquests are held without a jury. However, if a death occurs in very special circumstances – for example in prison, in police custody, at work or when there is an ongoing risk to the health and safety of the public – the inquest must be held with a jury.

Calling witnesses

The coroner will decide which witnesses to call and in what order they give their evidence. Witnesses will normally have to attend in person, but sometimes the coroner will accept written statements if the witness cannot add more information when being questioned.

If a person has been involved in causing the death and is facing a criminal charge, they may be required to attend the inquest. If so, they will be sworn in as a witness. However, they do not have to answer any questions that imply that they are guilty.

If you think that a person should be sworn in as a witness, speak to the coroner's officer.

Questioning witnesses

The coroner will allow certain people to question a witness. This could be someone who has a 'proper interest' in the inquest such as a close relative.

If you think that you may be able to offer evidence or if you would like to suggest that particular witnesses are called, you should contact the coroner before the inquest.

Delivering the verdict

The coroner will examine the evidence closely and then deliver their verdict. A possible verdict could be that the person died because of:

- natural causes
- an accident or misadventure
- killing themselves
- unlawful or lawful killing.

If there is not sufficient evidence for any other verdict, the coroner could deliver an open verdict.

The coroner will deliver their verdict as a short-form verdict (as set out above) or, if more appropriate, in a narrative form. A narrative verdict would be a short factual account of how the death came about.

The coroner will then inform the Registrar of Deaths of the verdict, so that the Registrar can issue the death certificate.

What happens if someone is charged for causing the death?

If a person has been charged with murder or manslaughter, the inquest will be adjourned until the criminal proceedings are over. After adjourning the inquest, the coroner reports the facts that have been established about the death (who the deceased was and where and when they died, as well as the cause of death if established at that stage), so that the death can be registered.

When the trial is over, the coroner will resume the inquest – if they believe that there is sufficient cause to do so. Usually the relevant facts will have been brought to light during the criminal trial.

What happens after the inquest?

Can I challenge the outcome of an inquest?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the inquest, it is possible to challenge a coroner's decisions by applying for a judicial review within three months. However, you will need to speak to a lawyer with expertise in this area as it is a complex process.

You can also apply for a new inquest to be held. You can do this at any time, although it is better if you apply as soon as possible and get the help of a solicitor. You may be eligible for help with costs through the public funding scheme.

For more information about public funding, see section 6 Legal support.

Can I ask to see the coroner's notes?

If you would like to see the coroner's notes of evidence (called depositions), you can write to the coroner's office and request to see them. You will have to pay a fee, and this fee varies considerably across the country. Keep in mind that the depositions may be a transcript from a tape recording or the coroner's own notes which may not be a full, word-for-word record.

The police investigation and prosecution

As a bereaved family member, you may find the police investigation stressful and upsetting. However, it is vital that the police are able to gather all the evidence they need to pursue their investigations.

You need to be aware of how the investigation can have an impact on your life and what the police may expect of you. This may include access to your home or premises. If your home is the scene of the crime, you could even be excluded from it and temporarily rehoused.

The investigation team will keep you informed of their progress and guide you through the trial process. They will also tell you what will be expected of you if you are called as a prosecution witness.

Understanding the investigation process

The police have a duty to keep you informed during the investigation. Police Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) will be the communication link between you and the investigating team.

The FLOs will keep you updated on the progress of the investigation and answer any questions you might have. If necessary, they can also put you in touch with the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO).

How the police gather evidence

In the first stage of the investigation, the police will gather all the forensic evidence that they need. They will normally take photographs at the scene of the crime and may take away materials, objects and personal items that may help their investigation.

These will be returned to you as soon as possible, except if the police need to keep some items as evidence until the case has gone to court.

For more details, see the section about personal possessions on page 14.

Helping to identify the deceased person

In certain cases, you may be asked to assist in obtaining dental records, fingerprints and DNA samples to identify the deceased person. If you are a blood relative, the police may also require a DNA sample from you. The FLOs will explain the reason for this and suggest the best method of taking the sample.

Being interviewed

The police may want to interview you as a member of the deceased person's family. The FLOs will explain the process and tell you if you are likely to be needed as a witness if the case goes to court.

If the crime occurred in your home

If the crime occurred in your home, you may not be able to enter it as the police will seal it while they record and gather evidence from the scene. The police will let you know what is happening and how long it may take.

If the examination of the home goes on for some time, you may need to be temporarily rehoused by the police or social services. If this happens, you should speak to the FLOs who will help you make arrangements.

Once the investigation is complete, the police will clean the areas they have worked in. They do not have to clean other areas of the site, but they may talk to the local authority Environmental Health Department for you, or arrange other specialist cleaners on your behalf.

If your home or possessions are damaged, and you can demonstrate that this was caused by police activity, you may be entitled to be reimbursed.

How long will the police investigation take?

There is no set time limit for the investigation, but the FLOs will keep you informed on the progress of the case. If no offender can be identified or traced, the case will remain open and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

What happens to the material collected?

All witness statements, interviews, specialist reports and other relevant material will be kept by the police in a case file. If the case is prosecuted, the defence will be entitled to see copies of these documents. However, any personal items in the case file will be removed.

For more information, speak to the FLOs.

Understanding the reasons for charging and prosecuting

Once the investigation is complete, a decision will be taken whether to charge and prosecute a defendant. This will usually be done by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the independent public body responsible for most criminal prosecutions in England and Wales.

The CPS can only bring a prosecution if it judges that there is enough evidence to provide a 'realistic prospect of conviction' on each charge. This means that the Crown Prosecutors consider that a court is more likely than not to convict the defendant of the alleged charge.

If this evidence test is met, the CPS will then decide whether the prosecution is in the public interest. This is almost always the case where a death has occurred.

The CPS must inform the bereaved family of charging decisions. They will also take your interests, and any views you express, into account when deciding whether or not to prosecute. However, ultimately the CPS prosecutes on behalf of the public, not the family of the deceased.

You can find more detail of how prosecution decisions are reached by asking the prosecutor of your case for the CPS leaflet The decision to prosecute.

Knowing your rights as a witness or victim of crime

The criminal justice system can appear quite daunting and complicated, especially in this difficult time. That's why *The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime* exists to ensure that you are treated properly. The code sets out the services that various criminal justice agencies in England and Wales are expected to provide, including:

- all police forces in England and Wales, including the British Transport Police and the Ministry of Defence Police
- the CPS
- the joint police/CPS Witness Care Units
- Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS)
- the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC)
- Youth Offending Teams
- the Prison Service
- the Probation Service
- the Parole Board
- the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA)
- the Tribunals Service – Criminal Injuries Compensation.

The code sets out their obligations to you and the complaint process if you are not satisfied with the services you receive.

Although the FLOs will manage most of the communications between you and the service providers, you will also need to nominate a spokesperson within your family. They will be officially entitled to receive services under the code.

You will find a leaflet in the back of this pack outlining your rights under the code. You can get a copy of the code at www.cjsonline.gov.uk

The Witness Charter

If you are a witness, *The Witness Charter* sets out the standards of service you can expect at every stage of the criminal justice process through to the end of the trial. *The Witness Charter* does not apply to close relatives of the deceased who are not witnesses in the criminal proceedings.

All organisations that provide services to witnesses in criminal proceedings – such as police forces, Witness Care Units, the CPS, HMCS and the Witness Service – fall under this charter.

For more information, ask the FLO for The Witness Charter – Our Promise to You leaflet.

What your Witness Care Officer provides

Going to court DVD

Your Witness Care Officer or your FLOs should provide you with a DVD called *Going to court: a step by step guide to being a witness*. This DVD is designed especially to help adult witnesses understand their role in the court process. It is an

easy-to-follow animation seen through the eyes of a witness. It explains what to expect throughout the court process and follows the journey of one witness, from making a statement through to the end of the trial.

The DVD is available with voiceovers and subtitles in English and Welsh, and voiceovers in Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi, as well as with British Sign Language (BSL). It is also available to view and download online, where it is also translated into Polish, at www.direct.gov.uk/goingtocourtvideo

Information on being a prosecution witness

Your Witness Care Officer should also give you a leaflet called *You are a prosecution witness* with information on the services and facilities available at the court. It includes details on who to contact at the court, what to expect on arrival and what happens after you have given your evidence. The leaflet will include a map showing how to get to the court and is available in English and Welsh, with copies available in Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Polish and large print.

The leaflet can also be found on the HMCS website at www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/HMCSCourtFinder. Select the name of the court from the 'Court name search', then click on 'Get court details'. In 'More information', click 'Leaflets'; scroll down and select 'Prosecution witness leaflet' in your preferred language.

Pre-trial therapy

Your doctor or another health professional may advise that you need counselling or some other form of therapy before the court proceedings start. The health or social care professionals supporting you will make the best decision possible when suggesting the type of therapy you may need.

If the witness is a child, the decision to advise therapy will be taken by the professionals responsible for the welfare of the child in consultation with the child's carers.

In some instances, the type of therapy that you are given may weaken the evidence you give as a witness. This is because of the potential effect the therapy can have on the reliability of your testimony. A member of the CPS will be able to offer you any advice on this. You can also find more information on the CPS website at www.cps.gov.uk

Meeting the Crown Prosecution Service

In most cases, the CPS will offer to meet the victim's family after a defendant has been charged, as part of its Victim Focus Scheme. At the meeting, the prosecutor will explain the role of the CPS, the charging decision, the court process and how to make a Victim Personal Statement (VPS).

The meeting is optional, so you do not have to go. If you decide not to go but change your mind before the trial, you should let the FLOs know. They can then contact the prosecutor to arrange the meeting.

Who will attend the meeting and where will it take place?

The CPS prosecutor and the FLOs will attend the meeting. The prosecutor will manage the meeting, perhaps supported by a CPS colleague.

The meeting will usually take place in the CPS office where the prosecutor works. If this is inconvenient for you, you should let the FLOs know so that the prosecutor can consider whether any alternative arrangements can be made.

What will happen at the meeting?

At your meeting the prosecutor will:

- deal with any questions and concerns you may have
- outline the court process
- outline the progress of the case
- explain the role of the CPS to you

- explain the legal basis of the charges on which the prosecution is proceeding
- explain the Victim Personal Statement.

The prosecution will also try to answer any questions you have about the case, although they might not be able to discuss the details of any evidence.

You can download a booklet on the Victim Focus Scheme at www.cps.gov.uk

The Crown Prosecution Service's duty to you

The CPS is committed to consider the families of victims in making and communicating its decisions. In particular, it promises to:

- take into account how a decision about charging a defendant will impact on you
- inform you if the charge is withdrawn, discontinued or substantially altered
- seek, if possible, the family's view when considering the acceptability of a plea.

You can get a copy of the Prosecutors' Pledge which sets out all CPS commitments to victims and bereaved families at www.cps.gov.uk

The Crown Prosecution Service's standards of care for witnesses

The CPS recognises that involvement in criminal proceedings can be very upsetting for bereaved families. Its standards of care and treatment commit it to:

- contact you direct in order to explain a decision not to go ahead with a prosecution, or to change a charge substantially
- offer to meet with you if you require a further explanation of a decision
- send you a leaflet explaining how prosecution decisions are reached.

You can get copies of the CPS leaflets *Statement on the Treatment of Victims and Witnesses*, *The Code for Crown Prosecutors* or *The Decision to Prosecute* by calling the CPS Communications Branch on 020 7796 8023.

Making a Victim Personal Statement

In cases of murder and manslaughter, close relatives can make a Victim Personal Statement (VPS). This is also sometimes referred to as a Victim Impact Statement or a Family Impact Statement.

The VPS gives you the opportunity to tell the court about how the crime has affected you. The FLOs will either take the VPS or arrange for it to be taken by a member of the investigation team.

You do not have to make a VPS if you do not want to. If you do not want to make one straight away, you can always ask the FLOs to arrange it at a later date. You will find more information about the VPS in the leaflet *Making a Victim Personal Statement* – ask an FLO for a copy.

Who can make a Victim Personal Statement?

All close relatives of the deceased will be asked if they wish to make a VPS. The VPS should not be confused with a witness statement – you will only be asked to make a witness statement if you are a witness in the trial.

What information can I give?

You can say what you want, in your own words. For example, you may want to say:

- if you feel vulnerable or intimidated
- how the crime has affected you
- if you feel that racial hostility was a motivation for the crime

- if you feel that faith, cultural background or disability were factors in the crime
- any concerns you have regarding the defendant being given bail or released to an area near you
- if the crime has impacted on any medical or social problems
- anything else that you feel would be helpful or relevant.

What happens to the Victim Personal Statement once I have made it?

If you do choose to make a VPS, it will become part of the case papers. This means that the statement can be seen by everyone involved with the case. This can include:

- the police
- CPS staff, including the prosecutor
- the defence team
- magistrates or judges at court.

As a relative of the victim, you will not normally be able to see the case papers. This is because you may be a witness to the case or could speak to witnesses about the statements and other paperwork.

When will the court consider the Victim Personal Statement?

Depending on the circumstances, the statement may be read out to the court by the CPS prosecutor. Alternatively, the judge may read your statement in private. You should tell the CPS prosecutor which of these you would prefer so that they can tell the judge.

Will I be cross-examined about my Victim Personal Statement?

As part of the trial process, the defence must be shown the case papers. They will see your VPS, and if you are called as a witness, they may ask you questions about what you have said.

Once you have made a VPS you cannot withdraw it or change the content. You can, however, make another VPS to clarify or change something you said in a previous statement.

If there's an appeal, will the Court of Appeal see my Victim Personal Statement?

The papers that are sent from the Crown Court to the Court of Appeal will also include your VPS.

You may want to update your VPS so that the Court of Appeal is aware of any changes since the original VPS was filed. Talk to your FLO about the possibility of making a new VPS.

Prosecuting your case privately

When someone dies as a result of a crime, the police and the CPS will normally start criminal proceedings against the prosecuted person – as long as there is sufficient evidence to do so.

If, for some reason, criminal proceedings do not start, there is nothing to stop you from starting your own private prosecution. But you must make sure that you get legal advice before you take a step like this. Prosecuting a case privately could be very expensive as public funding (known as Legal Aid) is usually not available.

The court

Even though all criminal cases start in magistrates' courts, the most serious offences, such as murder and manslaughter, must be tried before a judge and jury in the Crown Court.

The trial will begin with a hearing where the defendant will plead guilty or not guilty. The jury must then reach a conclusive verdict before the judge can pass a sentence.

Getting support before attending a court case

The Witness Service, run by Victim Support, gives free and confidential information and support to witnesses, victims and their families. This service is available in every magistrates' court and Crown Court in England and Wales. You can arrange a visit to the court before the trial, get information about how the court works, or have a representative sit with your family to give you support during the trial.

Where court facilities allow, you will be seated away from the relatives or friends of the defendant in the courtroom. Similarly, when you are waiting for the trial to commence or recommence, staff from the court and the Witness Service will try to give you a room where you can sit and wait with relatives and friends, away from the defendant and their family or associates.

If the Witness Service has not already been in touch with you, you should contact them before the trial. Your Police Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) may be able to help.

Going to a magistrates' court

All criminal cases start in magistrates' courts, although the most serious offences – such as murder or manslaughter – can only be tried in the Crown Court before a judge and jury.

If a case is sent for trial at the Crown Court, the defendant will either be granted bail (be released) or kept in custody at the magistrates' court until they appear at the Crown Court. If the defendant is a youth and they are not granted bail, they will be kept in custody in a special part of the magistrates' court known as the Youth Court.

What happens if the defendant is granted bail?

A defendant will normally be granted bail by the police or the court, unless they have good reason to believe that the defendant may:

- not attend the trial
- commit an offence while on bail
- interfere with witnesses
- obstruct the course of justice.

The period of bail should never last longer than 12 weeks for an adult defendant and 10 weeks for a youth defendant.

Bail with conditions attached

If the court grants bail to someone charged with a murder, it can put conditions on this bail – such as limiting where the defendant stays or preventing the defendant from coming near you, your family or your home.

If the defendant has had a previous conviction for murder or manslaughter, they will only be released on bail for exceptional reasons. The police will tell you if a defendant is granted bail and if there are any conditions attached. They will also let you know what happens if the conditions are broken.

If you have concerns about the defendant being granted bail, it is important that you tell the police – either directly or through a Victim Personal Statement. The police will pass your views on to the Crown Prosecution Service who will make them known to the court. If bail is still granted, the prosecution may, in certain circumstances, appeal against the decision.

Going to Crown Court

When a case goes straight from a magistrates' court to Crown Court, the Crown Court arranges for an early hearing – this is known as a 'plea and case management hearing'. The Witness Care Unit will notify you of the date of the hearing.

What happens at the hearing?

The hearing is the first opportunity for the defendant to plead in the Crown Court.

If the defendant pleads guilty, the judge may pass sentence straight away. However, if pre-sentence reports are required, the sentence will be adjourned to another date as it may be several weeks before these reports are available.

If the defendant pleads not guilty, the judge will look into the issues involved and ask the prosecution and defence for an estimate of how long they think the trial will take. After consulting with the court's listing officer, the judge will arrange a date for the trial.

The court will try to choose a date for the trial that is convenient for the prosecution and their witnesses. They will aim to start within 16 weeks of the crime being committed or, if the case was sent from a magistrates' court, within 26 weeks. If there is likely to be a delay, the police will let you know and explain the reasons.

Who will attend the trial?

Most criminal trials are held in an open court. This means that the public and press can attend the trial. An open court

ensures that rules of evidence are always observed. Rules of evidence spell out what can and cannot be said in court. Although they can seem frustrating and confusing, they are important. If evidence is not given properly, the jury may not reach a reliable verdict.

These people will be present at a trial:

- the judge
- the jury
- the prosecution team
- the defence team
- the court usher
- the court clerk.

The jury

A jury is made up of 12 people between the ages of 18 and 70 who are picked randomly from the electoral register. A jury is completely independent of the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and anyone else involved in the case. Their role is to decide whether the defendant is guilty or not. Before the trial can begin, the jury must be sworn in.

The judge

The judge cannot influence or override the jury's decision. The judge's role is to:

- have the final decision on questions of law
- sum up the evidence for the jury
- tell the jury about the relevant law
- let the accused go or pass a sentence when the jury has given its verdict.

What happens at the trial?

A defendant is regarded as innocent – unless they plead guilty or are found guilty at the end of a trial.

If, on the day of the trial, the defendant pleads guilty, there is no need to swear in a jury. Instead, the court may move straight on to sentencing. However, if the court needs more information about the defendant, it will delay sentencing while preparing reports.

If the defendant continues to plead not guilty, the jury is sworn in, and the trial begins.

The defendant can change their mind at any point during the trial and plead guilty. The jury will then have to give a formal verdict of guilty and the court may then move on to sentencing the defendant on that day. However, if the court needs more information about the defendant, it will delay sentencing while reports are prepared.

How do the jury agree on a verdict?

If the 12 jurors cannot agree on a verdict, the judge may ask them to bring in a majority verdict. This means that at least ten of the jurors must agree on a verdict. If the jury is still unable to reach a verdict, the judge will discharge them from giving a verdict and order a retrial.

If the jury gives a verdict of not guilty, the prosecution cannot appeal and the defendant cannot be tried again for the same offence, except in very limited cases.

If the defendant is found guilty, the defence has the right to appeal to the appropriate court.

Can I get my expenses paid to attend trial?

If you are attending the trial as a witness, the Crown Prosecution Service will pay certain expenses for the days when you give evidence.

If you are not a witness and attending the trial may cause you financial difficulties, Victim Support may be able to help you to access funds to cover some expenses.

For more information, contact your local Victim Support Scheme or the Witness Service at the relevant Crown Court.

Knowing the standards of service you can expect at court

What are the standards of service?

The *Courts Charter for Court Users* sets out the standards of service that anyone going to court can expect of **Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS)**.

To get a copy of the charter, contact HMCS.

Call: 0845 456 8770

Go to: www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk

See *section 6 Making a complaint* for details on how to make a complaint.

The sentence

The judge will normally pass sentence within four weeks after the offender was convicted. Before sentencing, the judge will consider the facts and circumstances of the offence. They will also take into account the defence's arguments for a more lenient sentence and any Victim Personal Statements.

The most severe sentence a judge can pass is a life sentence.

Understanding what happens before sentencing

Before the judge passes sentence, the prosecution and the defence will make their final summaries.

First, the prosecution will summarise the circumstances of the offence. They will describe the defendant's background by giving details of their education, employment and financial circumstances. They will also include details of any previous convictions, as the court will consider any pre-sentence reports on the offender.

The defence will then put forward their arguments for a lenient sentence – this is known as a plea in mitigation. If the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) detects incorrect information, or unfair criticism of the person who has died in the plea in mitigation, they will challenge these statements.

Sentencing normally happens within four weeks of the end of the trial. A defendant who is found guilty at a trial can be granted bail while waiting for sentence. If the defendant was on bail up to the trial, they will usually continue on bail – unless the court believes that it is now necessary to keep the defendant in custody. Likewise, if the defendant was kept in custody before the trial, they will usually stay there until they are sentenced.

When the judge decides what sentence to pass, they will take account of:

- the facts of the offence
- the circumstances of the offender
- any plea in mitigation
- any Victim Personal Statements.

Knowing about different types of sentences

The most important distinction between sentences is whether they are determinate or indeterminate.

- A *determinate sentence* is where the sentence has a defined length.
- An *indeterminate sentence* (such as a life sentence) is where the offender will only be released after serving a set minimum length of time in prison. After this, their release is decided by a body such as the Parole Board.

For more information about the Parole Board, see After the sentence has been passed later in this section.

Indeterminate sentences

Indeterminate sentences include:

- life sentences
- indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP).

Life sentence

If the defendant is convicted of murder, the judge must impose a mandatory life sentence. The name for this sentence varies depending on the age of the offender:

- If the offender is between 10 and 18, the sentence is called 'detention at Her Majesty's pleasure'.
- If the offender is between 18 and 21, the sentence is called 'custody for life'.
- If the offender is over 21, the sentence is called 'life imprisonment'.

In all of these cases, the offender must serve a minimum period in prison (the tariff) which is set by the court. They will only be released if the Parole Board agrees.

A judge can also impose a life sentence for some of the most serious crimes such as manslaughter. This is known as a 'discretionary life sentence'.

Indeterminate sentence for public protection

If the defendant is convicted of a very serious sexual or violent offence, they may be sentenced to an indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP).

IPP sentences may be given for a range of sexual and violent offences such as manslaughter, wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, robbery and rape.

The judge can only give this sentence if the offender is considered dangerous and likely to cause serious harm to the public in a future sexual or violent offence.

As with life sentences, the offender must serve a minimum period in prison (the tariff set by the court) before being considered for release by the Parole Board.

A complete list of IPP offences is set out in the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

The tariff (or the minimum term)

The tariff – or the minimum term – is the minimum period of time which an offender (subject to an indeterminate sentence) has to serve in prison before they can be considered for release by the Parole Board. The tariff is set by the trial judge and announced in open court.

Where a life sentence is imposed for murder, the starting points for setting the tariff may be:

- whole life (offender will never be released from prison) – for the most serious cases
- 30-year starting point
- 15-year starting point
- 12-year starting point – for those aged 17 years or under.

Please note that the starting points for other indeterminate sentences are set out in guidelines and depend on the offence committed.

When the trial judge has decided on an appropriate starting point, they will consider any aggravating and mitigating factors. They will then move either up or down from the starting point to arrive at the appropriate minimum term.

Can indeterminate sentence prisoners be released?

Prisoners serving indeterminate sentences have no automatic right to be released. They must always serve a minimum term (the tariff) set by the trial judge. When the minimum term is up, the Parole Board will – through a rigorous assessment – determine whether they are suitable for release or not.

Depending on the outcome of their Parole Board reviews, prisoners serving indeterminate sentences may spend the remainder of their life in prison. However, if they are ordered to be released, they will spend a further period in the community on licence. During this period, they may be recalled to prison if their behaviour breaches the terms of the licence.

A life sentence prisoner remains subject to their licence for the rest of their life. An IPP prisoner can apply to end their licence period after 10 years in the community – but if necessary, they can remain on licence indefinitely.

Determinate sentences

The type of determinate sentence passed depends on whether the court assesses the offender to be dangerous and likely to cause harm to the public in the future.

If the defendant is convicted of a sexual or violent offence and is considered dangerous, they may be sentenced to an extended sentence for public protection (EPP).

A complete list of EPP offences is set out in the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

Can determinate sentence prisoners be released?

Offenders who are not considered 'dangerous' by the court are released automatically at the halfway point of their sentence. They will then remain on licence and under the supervision of the Probation Service until the end of their sentence. If an offender breaches the terms of the conditions of the licence, they can be recalled to prison.

Offenders who are considered 'dangerous' by the court may receive an EPP. They will be released at the halfway point of their custodial term, and remain on licence for the remaining half. But they will also receive an extended period of licence where they are supervised and may be recalled to prison at any time.

Appealing against a verdict, sentence or tariff

Bereaved family members cannot appeal against a not guilty verdict, a sentence or the length of a tariff (the minimum term that some prisoners must serve).

However, if you think that the sentence is lenient, you can discuss your concerns with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). They may support your view and decide to refer the case to the Attorney General. If the Attorney General thinks that the sentence or tariff is unduly lenient, they can refer the case to the Court of Appeal, which may consider increasing the sentence.

The Attorney General's Office has to refer cases within 28 days of the day on which the sentence was passed. So you must make sure that you contact the CPS straight after the offender has been sentenced.

Alternatively, you may contact the **Attorney General's Office** yourself.

Write to:

Attorney General's Office
20 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0NF

Go to: www.attorneygeneral.gov.uk

Can the defendant appeal?

A defendant who has been convicted in the magistrates' court may appeal to the Crown Court against their conviction and/or sentence.

A defendant convicted in the Crown Court may appeal to the Court of Appeal against their conviction and/or sentence. If they were convicted of murder, they cannot appeal against their sentence but they can appeal against the tariff. In certain circumstances, they can also appeal to the House of Lords.

Their appeal may be based on the facts of the case, a mixture of fact and law, or just on a legal point.

What happens if the defendant makes an appeal to the Court of Appeal?

If the defendant wants to make an appeal, they will usually need to apply for 'permission to appeal' to a High Court judge. In the majority of cases, the judge will refuse the application.

However, if the judge considers that there may be merit in what the defendant is saying, they will give permission for an appeal to go ahead. The appeal hearing will take place in a courtroom open to the public, usually before three judges – known as 'the full Court of Appeal'.

If permission to appeal is refused, can the defendant make another application?

If permission to appeal is refused, the defendant can then decide whether or not they want to renew their application.

If an application is renewed, there will be a hearing in a public courtroom before the full Court of Appeal, but the defendant will not be given public funding for a barrister to put their case to the court; the judges will usually just consider the case by referring to the paperwork.

When the judges are considering a renewed application for permission to appeal against a sentence, they may exceptionally decide to give permission to appeal. They may then adjourn the case or may immediately make a final decision about the appeal itself. However, if the renewed application is against a conviction and they decide exceptionally to give permission to appeal, the hearing will be adjourned to allow the prosecution to attend.

Will I be told if the defendant makes an appeal?

The Court of Appeal will notify the local Witness Care Unit who will inform the police. You will then be told if the defendant has been given permission to appeal or if there is going to be a hearing in public. They will also tell you:

- if the defendant is granted bail before the appeal is considered
- the date of the appeal
- the outcome of the appeal.

What happens at the full appeal hearing?

At the hearing, the judges may decide to reject the appeal – in this case the matter is finished.

If a defendant is *appealing against their conviction*, the prosecuting authority (usually the CPS) and barristers representing the prosecution and defence will attend the hearing.

If a defendant is *appealing against their sentence*, the defence will be represented by a barrister. The prosecution will be informed that the hearing is taking place, but they do not normally attend. However, if you think that they should, contact the CPS. If the defendant is not represented by a barrister, the barrister representing the prosecution will not be able to speak to the court as this is considered unfair.

During the appeal, the defence barrister (and the prosecution barrister if they are attending) will put their arguments to the court about the length of the sentence or about whether the conviction should be quashed.

At the appeal, the court will not go through all the evidence, and it is very rare for there to be any witnesses giving evidence. If any evidence is given, it is usually by expert witnesses such as doctors, psychiatrists and forensic experts.

The hearing will usually take place at the Royal Courts of Justice in London.

Can I attend an appeal hearing?

If you want to attend the appeal hearing you should speak to the Police Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) who can refer you to the Witness Service. It is important that you make any arrangements to attend court via the Witness Service, so that they can let you know of any late changes to the date or the time of the appeal hearing.

The Witness Service can also make arrangements with the Criminal Appeal Office if you need certain facilities, such as using a private room while you are waiting for the hearing to start.

Alternatively, you can contact the **Witness Service** yourself.

Write to:

Witness Service
c/o Southwark Crown Court
1 English Grounds (off Battlebridge Lane)
Southwark
London SE1 2HU

Call: 020 7403 6200

Email: southwark.ccws@virgin.net

You can also contact **Victim Support**.

Call: 0845 30 30 900

Email: supportline@victimsupport.org.uk

You may also want to contact the **Criminal Appeal Office**, which provides administrative support to the Court of Appeal.

Write to:

Customer Service Manager
Criminal Appeal Office
Royal Courts of Justice
Strand
London WC2A 2LL

Call: 020 7947 6011

Email: criminalappealoffice.generaloffice@hmcourts-service.x.gsi.gov.uk

When you arrive at the court, you should make yourself known to the usher or court clerk. They will be able to arrange for you to be seated away from anyone connected with the defendant who may also be attending.

How do I find out about the outcome of the hearing?

The local Witness Care Unit will be informed of the outcome of the hearing so that this information can be passed on to you. They will also be able to offer you the opportunity to request a copy of the judgment given by the court. However, the judgment is not usually available until about six weeks after the date of the hearing.

After the sentence has been passed

Your rights as a bereaved family member do not necessarily end with the court process. You may have a right to be kept informed about certain matters during the prisoner's sentence and to be consulted about any arrangements for parole.

You may also be entitled to put your views forward to the Parole Board, and you can report any unwanted contact from the offender while they are in prison.

Being contacted by the probation services

After the sentence has been passed, you may be contacted by the Probation Victim Contact Scheme. This will happen if the offender has been convicted of a violent or sexual offence *and*:

- has received a sentence of 12 months or more in prison
or
- if the offender is suffering from a mental health condition, has been made subject to certain types of hospital order and has been referred to hospital for treatment.

For more information about mentally disordered offenders, see section 4.

Participating in the probation scheme is voluntary. The Police Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) or the Witness Care Officer will ask if you wish to be contacted. If you agree, they will pass your details to your local Probation Victim Liaison Team who will contact you to explain the service they provide.

Anything you tell the team will be confidential and you may choose to opt in or out of the scheme at any point during the offender's sentence.

What the Probation Victim Contact Scheme provides

The probation scheme exists to keep you informed during the offender's sentence, and allows you to express your views if the offender is being considered for release.

The scheme provides:

- a chance to voice your concerns or anxieties about the offender
- updates at key stages during the offender's sentence
- information about the likely supervision arrangements after the offender is released
- an opportunity to comment on the offender's conditions of release – for example, whether the offender should be barred from contacting you or your family, or from entering a specific geographical area.

Meeting with the Probation Victim Liaison Officer

As a first step, you will normally be contacted in writing with a suggested date and time to meet with your Victim Liaison Officer (VLO), who will talk you through the process of the probation scheme.

This meeting will usually be at your home, but you can suggest an alternative if that is not convenient for you. If you have been in contact with the FLOs during the trial, they may also attend.

This first meeting will explain:

- the purpose of the Probation Victim Liaison Scheme
- any key dates when the offender might be eligible for release or to apply for release
- any relevant criminal justice or mental health processes
- your right to make your views known about the conditions for the offender's release.

Your right to be informed

You should expect to be informed by your VLO about decisions made during the offender's sentence that could affect you. In particular, you should be informed if the offender:

- applies for, or is granted, Release on Temporary Licence – whether it is for work or education outside the prison or for compassionate reasons
- is considered for, or is granted, a move to open prison conditions, or a transfer to hospital for treatment of a mental health condition
- has their life sentence tariff changed
- escapes from, or is returned to, prison
- becomes eligible for a Parole Board hearing and the outcome of that review
- is recalled to custody following their release on licence as well as if they appeal against their recall and any outcomes from this.

In the case of foreign national prisoners, you may also be informed if the offender:

- is released on bail
- is released from UK Border Agency detention
- has been deported from the UK.

Speaking to the Prison Service Victim Helpline

If you receive, or are worried about, unwanted contact from a prisoner, including letters and phone calls, call the Prison Service Victim Helpline on 0845 7585 112.

The helpline staff will pass on your concerns to the prison governor, who will investigate and decide whether to take any action. This could include checking the prisoner's mail or monitoring their phone calls to stop them contacting you again.

If there is enough evidence, there could be disciplinary or criminal proceedings. The unwanted contact may also be taken into account when the offender is being considered for parole or temporary release.

If you decided not to use the Probation Victim Contact Scheme, you can call the helpline to voice your worries about the possible temporary release, parole or final release of a prisoner.

The helpline will confirm in writing that it has passed your concerns to the governor, who may also write to you to explain any action that has been taken.

Please note that the helpline can only deal with calls about prisoners in custody and cannot answer queries about mentally disordered offenders detained for treatment in hospital.

Putting your views forward to the Parole Board

The Parole Board is an independent body that decides whether prisoners may be safely released from prison. As a bereaved family member, you are entitled to have your say about any conditions that might be put on such a release.

For example, you may wish to request a 'no contact' condition to stop the offender contacting you or members of your family. You may also request an exclusion zone, barring the offender from your home or place of work. Offenders who breach such terms on their licence may be returned to prison.

You may also be entitled to submit a personal statement to a Parole Board panel when they are considering whether to release the offender or transfer them to open prison conditions. If an offender has appealed against their return to prison because they breached victim-related licence conditions, you can also submit a personal statement.

The statement can update an earlier one from the trial, such as a Victim Personal Statement, or it may be completely new. It should outline:

- your views about the original impact of the offence and any ongoing consequences – such as information about the physical, emotional, medical and financial impact of the crime on you and your family
- the impact the offender's release might have on your life, including why you believe the offender may continue to present a risk to you or members of your family.

4 Mentally disordered offenders

Knowing how offenders are convicted 88

Understanding that an offender
can be unfit to plead 89

Understanding that offenders
may be discharged 90

Being aware that prisoners may be
transferred to psychiatric hospitals 94

Mentally disordered offenders

Offenders who have a mental disorder may be treated differently from other offenders. They may, for example, be found 'unfit to plead' as a defendant. In this case, they will not face a full trial. If a mentally disordered offender is tried and convicted, they may be sent to hospital instead of prison.

As a member of the victim's family, you may find this lenient. However, it is important to remember that strict controls apply to such offenders, and every care is taken to ensure that they do not become a danger to the public again.

Knowing how offenders are convicted

If the offender has a mental disorder, the court may choose not to send them to prison. Instead, they may be admitted to hospital under the Mental Health Act 1983. For this to happen, there must be strong medical evidence of the offender's condition and that they need treatment in hospital.

If the court judges that the offender is a danger to the public, it can put special restrictions on an offender in hospital. Anyone kept in hospital under these arrangements is known as a 'restricted patient'. Restricted patients cannot be given temporary leave from hospital or be transferred to another hospital without the Secretary of State's permission.

Even if the defendant is found not guilty of the crime, the court can still order that they are admitted to hospital if it considers that the offender was mentally disordered at the time.

Understanding that an offender can be unfit to plead

At the trial, the defendant may be found unfit to plead. This can happen if there is medical evidence that they are unable to understand the legal process or to instruct a lawyer. In that case, the jury will hear a 'trial of the facts' to decide whether the person committed the crime.

If the conclusion is yes, the court may not find the offender guilty, but it can order the defendant to be admitted to hospital and it may also put a restriction on the offender. This is not final, however. The defendant can still be sent for a full trial at any time if their condition improves.

Understanding that offenders may be discharged

Being sent to hospital is not like a prison sentence. There is no set minimum or maximum time for which offenders must be kept in hospital.

However, for a patient to be discharged, doctors must advise that their treatment has been successful and that the offender can live safely in the community again. There must be a reduced risk of repeat offending, and the patient must also understand what they have done and what effect it has had on others, including the victim and their families. Discharge may also be subject to conditions under a Community Treatment Order.

Only the Secretary of State or the First Tier Tribunal (Mental Health) can order the discharge of a restricted patient. However, if this happens, the offender will have conditions placed on them, such as being supervised – usually by a psychiatrist, community social worker or community psychiatric nurse. The supervisor can immediately send the patient back to hospital if necessary and should constantly assess and review the level of risk to the patient and the public.

Your right to information

As a bereaved family member, you are entitled to know if the offender is being considered for discharge and to ask for conditions to be applied to their release for your own protection.

If the offender is a member of your own family and is likely to have contact with family members, you may also be

involved in the arrangements for their release. Otherwise, the patient's progress in hospital and any mental health tribunal proceedings are confidential and only basic non-medical information will be available.

If you want to request information or make representations, you should first contact the Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) who will talk to the relevant authorities or advise you on how to proceed.

The First Tier Tribunal (Mental Health)

Both restricted and non-restricted patients can apply for a review of their detention to the First Tier Tribunal (Mental Health) – formerly the Mental Health Review Tribunal. All patients can do this after the first six months of detention and once a year after that. If a restricted patient has not made an application after three years, the Secretary of State will automatically refer the case to the tribunal.

The tribunal consists of three independent members:

- a president who must be a lawyer (in restricted patient cases, the president must be a judge)
- a doctor
- a lay person.

To decide whether to discharge the patient, the tribunal has to take into account:

- whether the patient is still suffering from a mental disorder
- whether the disorder is so serious that the patient still needs to be kept in hospital for medical treatment

and if so:

- whether the patient's health or safety, or the health or safety of other people, depends on them staying in hospital.

Before the hearing, the tribunal's doctor will examine the patient. The tribunal will also consider evidence from those involved in the patient's care and management. If the patient is restricted, the Ministry of Justice will also be involved.

Your rights in the tribunal process

Hearings generally happen in private as the conditions that the tribunal has to consider are mainly clinical.

As a bereaved family member, you will not normally be able to attend – unless the president decides that you should be invited. However, in restricted cases, your VLO may be able to represent you. They will also be informed if a discharge is being considered, and about the details of the discharge.

In non-restricted cases, you may be represented through the hospital managers and they will also advise you about the decision on discharge.

For more information about your rights in this process, speak to your VLO.

Write to the Tribunal:

England:

Head of Secretariat
First Tier Tribunal (Mental Health)
PO Box 8793
5th Floor
Leicester LE1 8BN

Wales:

Head of Secretariat
Mental Health Tribunal for Wales
4th Floor
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ

Being aware that prisoners may be transferred to psychiatric hospitals

Offenders who are sent to prison on a life sentence can also be transferred to hospital for psychiatric treatment at any time if the Secretary of State issues a warrant or transfer direction. After treatment, they may be returned to prison to complete the sentence. However, if the prisoner has become eligible for parole, the Parole Board will consider this before the offender is discharged from hospital.

5 Death abroad

Death abroad

If your family member or friend died in a foreign country, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) can help you to cope with:

- the practicalities of dealing with a death overseas
- the steps you may need to take
- what may be done differently in the country where your friend or relative died.

Where a death has occurred in suspicious circumstances that may lead to legal proceedings overseas, the FCO can continue to keep you informed of developments and offer guidance and support. However, there is a limit to how involved the FCO can become in any legal proceedings.

The FCO has produced a leaflet called *Guide for Bereaved Families*. To download this leaflet and for more information about deaths abroad, go to www.fco.gov.uk

6 Funding and complaints

Criminal injuries compensation	97
Claiming compensation	98
Getting help with your claim	101
Legal support	102
Getting legal help	103
Getting financial help from the Legal Aid scheme	105
Useful contacts for getting legal support	107
Finding out if you are entitled to any benefits	109
Making a complaint	110
Complaining about your experience at court	111
Complaining directly to the organisation	114
Contacting your Member of Parliament	119
Contacting the Parliamentary Ombudsman	121

Criminal injuries compensation

If you are the relative or a dependant of someone who died as a result of a criminal injury sustained in Great Britain, you may be able to get compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA), under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. This section explains how the scheme works and who is allowed to claim.

However, if the death happened abroad, you will not be eligible for any compensation under this scheme. Please refer to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office *Guide for Bereaved Families*.

If the death happened in a country which is a member state of the European Union, CICA's EU Compensation Assistance Team (EUCAT) can provide practical help and advice about the compensation scheme that is in operation in the country where the injury took place. They can also help you to apply for compensation from that country as long as:

- injury took place on or after 1 July 2005 in a violent crime
- the crime took place in an EU country
- you are resident in the UK.

Contact **CICA's EU Compensation Team** for further details.

Call: 0800 358 3601

Email: eucat@cica.gsi.gov.uk

Go to: www.cica.gov.uk

Claiming compensation

The type and amount of compensation that you might qualify for depend on your personal circumstances.

Claiming the bereavement award

The bereavement award is a fixed payment of £5,500. If you are the only qualifying claimant, the payment doubles to £11,000.

You may qualify for the award if you are:

- a spouse or a civil partner, and you lived with the person immediately before they died
- an unmarried partner who lived with the person as husband or wife (or as a same sex partner) for at least two years before they died
- a person who would have been living with the deceased but infirmity or ill health prevented it
- a parent of the person who died (either a natural parent or someone who was accepted as a parent by the victim) – provided you were not estranged from them when they died
- a child (of any age) of the person who died (their natural child or someone accepted as their child by the victim) – provided you were not estranged from them when they died.

If you were financially dependent on the person who died

If you depended on the person financially immediately before they died, you may also be entitled to additional compensation. The amount you might get depends on how dependent you were. However, if the deceased person's income came from benefits, you will not be entitled to compensation.

If you were under 18 when the person died

If you were under 18 when the person died and were dependent on them for parental support, you may also be entitled to additional compensation.

If you witnessed a crime

You can also apply for additional compensation if:

- you suffered from a mental injury because you saw a loved one receive fatal injuries; or
- you were closely involved in what happened immediately after the incident.

How to apply

You must apply for compensation within two years of the incident. This time limit may be waived but only in limited circumstances.

CICA will decide whether you are eligible for the award. Please note that they may reduce or refuse claims on the grounds of your, or the deceased person's, behaviour or criminal convictions.

For an application form, details of other documents you will need or for more information, contact **CICA**.

Write to:

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority
Tay House
300 Bath Street
Glasgow G2 4LN

Call: 0800 358 3601 *Calls are free*

Go to: www.cica.gov.uk

Getting help with your claim

When you apply for criminal injuries compensation from CICA, you can get free advice from:

- CICA – call 0800 358 3601
- Victim Support – call 0845 30 30 900 or go to www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Citizens Advice – go to www.citizensadvice.org.uk

If you choose paid representation, CICA cannot meet the costs of this.

Legal support

This section explains how to get the help and support you might need with any legal issues that are linked to the death.

Getting legal help

Get free legal advice and support from the Legal Help scheme

The Legal Help scheme gives you basic advice from a solicitor on almost all legal issues. The solicitor will be able to advise you in writing and in person, and will also write letters, negotiate or obtain a barrister's opinion.

If you receive Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Pension Credit, you automatically qualify for legal assistance. If you are on a low income and have little money you may still qualify for support.

To find out more about the scheme and to get free legal information, help and advice, contact **Community Legal Advice**. You can also order a leaflet explaining the various forms of legal aid available from them.

Call: 0845 345 4 345

Go to: www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

Get help with legal problems arising from a criminal case from the Community Legal Service

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) pays for the cost of prosecuting a murder or manslaughter case. However, you may also face other legal problems as a result of the crime such as a divorce, child matters, civil action, debts, eviction or problems at work.

If you need a solicitor to solve these legal problems, you may be entitled to support from the **Community Legal Service** fund to pay your legal costs.

Call: 0845 608 1122

Go to: www.legalservices.gov.uk

Get legal advice concerning a child

If you need specific legal advice about who a child should live or have contact with, there are many people you can contact.

- Talk to a solicitor who specialises in Children Act work. You can get a name and address from the

Law Society's Children Panel.

Call: 020 7242 1222

Go to: www.lawsociety.org.uk

You can also find the contact details of a local solicitor in the Yellow Pages or the Solicitors' Regional Directory which you may find at a public library.

- Contact your local **Citizens Advice Bureau.** To find details of your nearest bureau, see their website.

Go to: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

- Contact **Community Legal Advice.**

Call: 0845 345 4 345

Go to: www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

- Contact your local **Law Centre.**
To find your nearest Law Centre, look in your local phone directory or check the Law Centres Federation website.

Go to: www.lawcentres.org.uk

Getting financial help from the Legal Aid scheme

If you need further help, perhaps to bring court proceedings, the Legal Aid scheme may be able to fund your legal costs.

How do I qualify for support?

A solicitor, or a member of a Law Centre or Citizens Advice Bureau, will be able to tell you if you have a reasonable case and whether you will qualify for support. This will depend on the type of case, the merits of your case and how much money you have. You must also show that you have reasonable grounds for taking, defending or being a party to these legal proceedings.

Please note that even if your income is above the specified level, you may still be eligible for legal aid – however, you may be asked to contribute towards your legal costs.

How do I apply?

If a solicitor is willing to act for you, they will be able to apply for funding on your behalf. To find out which solicitors undertake Legal Aid work, look in the Community Legal Service Directory, which you can find in most reference libraries.

You can also contact the **Community Legal Service**.

Call: 0845 608 1122

Go to: www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

Do I have to pay any of it back?

If you qualify for Legal Aid, all or part of your legal costs will be paid by the Community Legal Service fund.

However, the Legal Services Commission has decided that anyone who gains or keeps money or property with the help of Legal Aid may have to repay some, or all, of the legal costs.

This means that your funding acts as a loan, and this is known as the statutory charge. However, the repayment may be postponed if the outstanding debt is registered against your property as security. Make sure that your legal adviser explains this to you before you proceed any further.

Useful contacts for getting legal support

Law Centres

Law Centres provide free, independent and professional legal advice.

To find your nearest Law Centre, look in your local telephone directory or check the Law Centres Federation website.

Go to: www.lawcentres.org.uk

Law Society

The Law Society is the professional body that all solicitors belong to. They can give you details about solicitors in your area.

Write to:

The Law Society
113 Chancery Lane
London WC2A 1PL

Call: 020 7242 1222

Go to: www.lawsociety.org.uk

Citizens Advice

The national Citizens Advice and its local Citizens Advice Bureaux can help you resolve legal, money and other problems by providing free, confidential and impartial information and advice.

Write to:

Citizens Advice
115–123 Pentonville Road
London N1 9LZ

Go to:

For online advice: www.adviceguide.org.uk
For contact details of your nearest bureau:
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Finding out if you are entitled to any benefits

When you have lost someone close, it is important to find out if you are entitled to any welfare benefits. You may be entitled to Bereavement Benefits. If you now have less money coming in, you may also be able to claim a benefit such as Income Support or Council Tax Benefit.

For help with understanding the benefits system and to talk through your entitlements, contact **Jobcentre Plus**.

Go to: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Call: 0800 055 6688

Textphone: 0800 023 4888

You can also get advice about benefits from your local **Citizens Advice Bureau**.

Go to: www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

Making a complaint

Although criminal justice agencies try to provide a good and consistent standard of service, you may sometimes not receive a sufficient level of support, information or advice from them. It is important that you are aware of your rights and know that you can make a complaint to the organisation in question.

Complaining about your experience at court

Complaining about the service at court

If you want to complain about the service you received at court, you need to contact Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS). They have three tiers of complaint handling:

1 Contact the relevant court or probate registry

If you are unhappy about the service that you have received from staff working in Crown, county and magistrates' courts and probate registries, you should write to the court or the senior manager for that office.

They will investigate your complaint and you should receive a reply to your complaint within five working days from the date they received your complaint.

2 Contact the area director

If you disagree with the reply that you have received, you can write to the area director and ask for it to be reconsidered. The area director is the person who is responsible for the administration of all the courts and probate registries in their area.

The area director's office will acknowledge your complaint within two working days and you can expect to receive a full reply within ten working days from the date they received your complaint.

To get the area director's address, contact the court or the probate registry.

3 Contact HMCS's Customer Service Unit

If you disagree with the decision of the area director, you can write to HMCS's Customer Service Unit and ask for your complaint to be reconsidered.

They will acknowledge receipt of your letter within two working days and you can expect to receive a full reply within 15 working days from the date they received your complaint.

Write to:

Customer Service Unit
HMCS
4th Floor
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

Call: 0845 456 8770

Complaining about a decision by a judge or magistrate

If you are unhappy with a decision made by a judge or magistrate, it can normally only be changed by asking a judge in a higher court to consider whether the decision was correct. This process is called 'making an appeal'. For further information on how to make an appeal, speak to the Crown Prosecution Service prosecution lawyer responsible for the case.

See *section 3* Appealing against a verdict, sentence or tariff for more information about making an appeal.

Complaining about the conduct of a judge, magistrate or coroner

If, however, you are complaining about the conduct (behaviour) of a judge, magistrate or coroner, or if you want to complain about an inquest, you need to contact the **Office for Judicial Complaints**.

Write to:

Office for Judicial Complaints
4th Floor
Clive House
70 Petty France
London SW1H 9EX

Call: 020 7189 2937

Complaining directly to the organisation

Complaining about a service provider under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Sometimes the criminal justice agencies you are dealing with fail to deliver their obligations under the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*.

The *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime* sets out clearly what services you can expect to receive from each of the criminal justice agencies. You can find out more about this at www.cjsonline.gov.uk

If you do not receive an acceptable level of service, you should make a complaint to the person you have been dealing with at that organisation. You should also make a complaint through the organisation's internal complaints procedure.

Below is a guide on the best way to make a complaint about the different criminal justice agencies:

Criminal justice agency	How to complain
Police	<p>Your local police station can provide you with a leaflet explaining how to make a complaint.</p> <p>You should receive a response within 10 working days.</p>
Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)	<p>Write a letter, outlining your complaint, to the CPS office that dealt with your case.</p> <p>You can find contact details for CPS offices at police stations or your local Citizens Advice Bureau, or in the telephone directory.</p> <p>You should receive a reply within three working days.</p>
Joint Police/Crown Prosecution Service Witness Care Units	<p>Write a letter, outlining your complaint, to the Witness Care Unit that dealt with your case.</p>
Crown Court and magistrates' court	<p>Your local court can provide you with a leaflet about the complaints procedure.</p> <p>You should make a complaint in writing to the Complaints Officer at the court.</p> <p>You should receive a reply within five working days.</p>

Criminal justice agency	How to complain (continued)
Court of Appeal	<p>Write a letter, outlining your complaint, to:</p> <p>The Customer Service Manager Criminal Appeal Office Royal Courts of Justice Strand London WC2A 2LL</p> <p>Or email: criminalappealoffice.generaloffice@hmcourts-service.x.gsi.gov.uk</p>
Youth Offending Team	<p>Write a letter, outlining your complaint, to the Youth Offending Team Manager at your local Youth Offending Team.</p>
National Probation Service	<p>Write a letter, outlining your complaint, to the local manager or Senior Probation Officer at the office you have been dealing with.</p>
Prison Service	<p>Write a letter, outlining your complaint, to:</p> <p>The Director General's Briefing and Casework Unit HM Prison Service Cleland House Page Street London SW1 4LN</p> <p>If the offender is held in a contracted prison, the Prison Service will refer the matter to the Office of Contracted Prisons.</p>

Criminal justice agency	How to complain (<i>continued</i>)
Parole Board	<p>Write a letter, outlining your complaint, to:</p> <p>The Complaints Officer Parole Board for England and Wales Grenadier House 99–105 Horseferry Road London SW1P 2DX</p>
Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority	<p>Write a letter, outlining your complaint, to:</p> <p>The Manager Customer Care Team Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority Tay House 300 Bath Street Glasgow G2 4LN</p> <p>You should receive a reply within 20 working days.</p>
Tribunals Service (Criminal Injuries Compensation)	<p>Write a letter, outlining your complaint, within three months of the hearing, to:</p> <p>Customer Service Manager Tribunals Service – Criminal Injuries Compensation 11th Floor Cardinal Tower 12 Farringdon Road London EC1M 3HS</p>

Criminal justice agency	How to complain (<i>continued</i>)
Criminal Cases Review Commission	Write a letter, outlining your complaint, to: The Complaints Manager Criminal Cases Review Commission Alpha Tower Suffolk Street Queensway Birmingham B1 1TT

Contacting your Member of Parliament

If you are unsatisfied with the way your case has been handled by any government agency and you have exhausted their internal complaints procedures, you can contact your Member of Parliament (MP).

By letter

A letter allows you to explain in more detail and your MP will have a written record of your problem.

Write to:

House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

You may also contact your MP through their local constituency office. Addresses and contact numbers will be listed in local libraries and town halls. Most MPs will also have personal websites where they will list their contact details.

By email

The majority of MPs now have email addresses that you can write to.

Go to: www.parliament.uk Look under 'Members and Staff' for a directory of addresses

By phone

You can contact the House of Commons switchboard and ask to speak to your MP.

Call: 020 7219 3000

If you do not know their name, contact the House of Commons Information Office.

Call: 020 7219 4272

You can also search for names and phone numbers on the UK Parliament website.

Go to: www.parliament.uk

Contacting the Parliamentary Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Ombudsman investigates complaints about government departments from members of the public. The Ombudsman has wide powers: they are able to obtain evidence from government departments and make recommendations about the cases they hear.

Cases must be referred to the Ombudsman by an MP. These include complaints about breaches of the Victims Code.

7 Glossary

Terms explained 123

Organisations and professions explained 139

Terms explained

This section lists and explains terms used in this pack. It also explains other terms that you may come across during the investigation or the court process.

Absolute discharge

The court decides to release and take no further action against an offender. The discharge will, however, appear on the offender's criminal record.

Accused

The person charged for allegedly committing the offence.

Acquittal

The release of a defendant after a 'not guilty' verdict or direction.

Act

An Act of Parliament creates a new law or changes an existing law. For example, the Human Tissue Act sets the legislation about the donation and usage of human tissue.

Adjourned generally

If the hearing of a case is adjourned, it has been temporarily suspended by the court. This is usually for a short period until, for example, the next day. But sometimes a hearing can be adjourned without a date being given.

Adjudication

The judgment or decision of a court or a tribunal.

Advocate

A barrister or solicitor in a hearing before a court (representing either the defence or the prosecution).

Affirmation

A witness's declaration confirming that the evidence they are giving is the truth. An affirmation is taken instead of the oath if the witness either has no religious belief or has religious beliefs that prevent them from taking the oath.

Ante

Same as 'before'. Within text it refers to an earlier passage.

Ante mortem

Before death.

Appeal

The application to a higher court or authority for reviewing the decision of a lower court or authority.

Arrest

The lawful detention by a police officer.

Assisted person (legally)

A party who is receiving legal aid.

Bail

The release of a defendant from custody until their next appearance in court. The court can sometimes place conditions on the bail that the defendant needs to comply with.

Bar

The collective term for barristers.

Barrister

A member of the Bar. A legal professional who usually works in the Crown Court and Appeal Court. Barristers have the right to appear and speak in the higher courts, unlike solicitors who may only appear in special circumstances.

Breach

When a person fails to fulfil either the requirements of a court order or the conditions of a post-release licence.

Brief

A solicitor's written instructions to appear at a hearing on behalf of either the defence or the prosecution. It sets out the facts of the case and any case law it relies on.

Case management

The set of processes, supporting information and actions that are required to take a case from initial creation through to completion. This includes information about the nature, handling and progress of a case.

Chambers

- 1 A private room or court that the public may not enter. This is where a district judge or judge may conduct certain sorts of hearings.
- 2 Offices used by a barrister.

Charge

A formal accusation against a person.

Circuit judge

A judge who sits in the Crown Court.

Civil

Matters concerning offences against private persons – not offences against the state.

Common law

The law established by previous cases.

Compelled

Where the witness is forced to attend court.

Compensation

Sum of money to make up, or make amends, for loss, breakage, hardship, inconvenience or personal injury caused.

Compensation order

A court order requiring the offender to pay compensation to the victim.

Concurrent sentence

When the court decides that a number of sentences should run at the same time.

Conditional discharge

The release of a convicted defendant on condition that they do not reoffend within a specified period of time.

Conduct money

Money paid to a witness before the hearing as compensation for the time they spend at court.

Consecutive sentence

When the court orders a subsequent sentence to start as soon as the previous sentence expires. Can involve more than two sentences.

Contempt of court

An offence where a person disobeys or wilfully disregards the judicial process. The offence can lead to imprisonment.

Conviction

When an offender has pleaded – or been found – guilty of an offence in a court, they are said to have been convicted. The conviction then appears on the offender's criminal record.

Coronial

Relating to a coroner or the coroner's office.

Corporate manslaughter

When a corporation is convicted for causing a person's death. This is after breaching the duty of care that the corporation owes to its employees, the public or anyone else.

Corroboration

Evidence that confirms a proposition that is already supported by evidence, for example forensic evidence in murder cases (such as blood stains or fibres).

Counsel

A barrister – i.e. a legal professional who appears and speaks in court. See *barrister*

Count

An individual offence (or charge) that is set out in an indictment. See *indictment*

Courtroom

The room where cases are heard.

Courts Charter

Sets out the standards of service that anyone going to court can expect from HM Courts Service.

Criminal

Person who is guilty of a criminal offence.

Custodial sentence

A sentence where the offender is locked up in a prison, a young offender institution or a secure training centre.

Defendant

Person standing trial or appearing for sentence.

Discharge

The offender is found guilty of the offence but no further action is taken and the offender is released (discharged).

The discharge can either be:

- an absolute discharge – where no further action is taken at all, or
- a conditional discharge – where no further action is taken as long as the offender does not offend again in a certain period of time.

Discontinuance

A decision by the Crown Prosecution Service not to continue with a case.

District judge

A legally qualified person who either sits in place of or with magistrates. Previously known as a stipendiary magistrate.

Divisional Court

This forms part of the Queen's Bench Division and deals with appeals on points of law from the courts.

Dock

The enclosure for the defendant on trial in a criminal court.

Duty Prosecutor

Duty Prosecutors are Crown Prosecutors who attend police stations to give guidance and advice to investigators. They also make charging decisions.

Either-way offence

An offence where the accused may be tried by the magistrates or sent to the Crown Court to be tried by jury.

Exhibit

Item or document used as evidence during a court trial or hearing.

Expert witness

A person who is employed to give evidence on a subject that they have particular expertise in.

Familial homicide

The offence of causing or allowing the death of a child or a vulnerable adult. Familial homicide was introduced in the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, and closed a legal loophole that allowed those jointly accused of murdering a child or a vulnerable adult to escape justice by remaining silent or blaming each other.

Family

Family or family member can include anyone who has had a direct and close relationship with the victim. This will include parents, partners, siblings, children and guardians. Please note that the relationship does not have to be biological.

High Court

A civil court which consists of three divisions:

- Queen's Bench – civil disputes for recovery of money, including breach of contract, personal injuries, libel or slander.
- Family – concerned with matrimonial matters and proceedings relating to children, for example wardship.
- Chancery – property matters, including fraud and bankruptcy.

Indictable offence

A criminal offence that can only be tried by the Crown Court. An indictable offence is classified 1, 2, 3 or 4. Murder is a class 1 offence.

Indictment

A written statement of the charges against a defendant who has been sent for trial to the Crown Court. The statement is signed by an officer of the court.

Judge

An officer appointed to administer the law and who has authority to hear and try cases in a court of law.

Judgment

The final decision of a court.

Judicial

Relating either to the administration of justice, or to the judgment of a court.

Judiciary

A judge, or another officer who is empowered to act as a judge.

Jurisdiction

The area and matters that a court has legal authority over.

Juror

A person who has been summoned by a court to be a member of the jury. *See jury*

Jury

A body of 12 people (jurors) who are sworn to try a case and then reach a verdict according to the evidence in a court.

Justice of the Peace

A lay magistrate, a person appointed to administer judicial business in a magistrates' court.

Also sits in the Crown Court with a judge or recorder to hear appeals and committals for sentence.

Law

The system of rules established by an Act of Parliament, custom or practice.

Lawyer

General term used to describe barristers and solicitors.

Legal Aid

A fund administered by the Legal Services Commission that pays the fees and expenses of counsel, solicitors or other legal representatives for those who cannot afford it themselves.

Magistrate

A magistrate sits in a group of three magistrates, and acts as a judge in the magistrates' court. Magistrates in England and Wales are trained volunteers.

Mitigation

The mitigation is an attempt by the defence to minimise the sentence by excusing, or partly excusing, the offence committed.

Newton Hearing (NH)

A Newton Hearing is held when a defendant admits their guilt, but disputes the prosecution's version of events. The court then needs to determine the basis on which the defendant is to be sentenced.

Offender

Someone who has been convicted of a crime.

Offending Behaviour Programme (OBP)

A programme of work undertaken with an offender that is designed to tackle the reasons or behaviour that led to their offending. Examples of Offending Behaviour Programmes are: Substance-related Offending, Drink-impaired Drivers; Aggression Replacement Therapy; Sex Offender Treatment Programme; Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme.

Order

A decision taken by a court.

Plea

A defendant's reply to a charge from a court – either guilty or not guilty

Post

Same as 'after'. Within text it refers something that can be found further on.

Precedent

A precedent case establishes principles of law that now act as an authority for future cases of a similar nature.

Pre-Sentence Report (PSR)

An impartial report that assesses the reasons for a person's offending and proposes actions to be taken to reduce the risk of further offending.

Pre-trial review

A preliminary appointment where the magistrates or district judge considers the issues before the court and fixes the timetable for the trial.

Prosecution

The prosecution is the legal party responsible for presenting the case against the accused in a criminal trial.

Prosecutor

Person who prosecutes – usually the Crown Prosecution Service.

Question of Fact

A dispute or controversy related to the facts of the case, rather than how the law is applied. Questions of Fact can be decided by the jury. If there is no jury, they are determined by the judge.

Question of Law

A Question of Law may arise in a court case or a criminal prosecution when there is an issue about how the law is applied. This could relate to what the law is, how it is applied to the facts in the case, and other conflicting legal points. All Questions of Law that arise before, during and after a trial have to be determined by the judge – not by the jury.

Reasonable doubt

To convict someone in a criminal court in the UK, the case has to be proved 'beyond reasonable doubt'. So the Crown Prosecutor must prove that there is no doubt that the defendant committed the offence.

Remand (in custody)

The accused person is kept in custody or granted bail when waiting to appear in court.

Repatriation

Returning the deceased's body to their country of origin.

Solicitor

Member of the legal profession who mainly advises clients and prepares their cases, and may also represent them in some courts. Solicitors may also act as advocates before certain courts or tribunals – although in the higher courts clients are normally represented by a barrister.

Special measures

If the witness is considered vulnerable or intimidated, the court can decide that special measures may be used to improve how they give evidence. This could be placing a screen between the witness and the defendant or letting the witness talk through a third party.

Statement

A written account that a witness makes to explain the facts and details of their experience of a crime.

Sub judice

When court proceedings are sub judice during a trial, the court case is under consideration. Details of the case cannot be disclosed to the media or public.

Summing up

A review of the evidence and directions as to the law by the judge immediately before the jury retires to consider its verdict.

Summons

A jury summons is an order to attend court for jury service.

A witness summons is an order to attend court and give evidence as a witness.

Surety

A surety is when a person agrees to be responsible and financially liable if the defendant does not show up at court.

Suspect

A person being investigated in relation to a particular offence or offences.

Suspended sentence

A custodial sentence that does not take effect unless the offender commits a subsequent offence within a specified period.

Trial window

A period of time in which the case must be listed for trial.

Verdict

The finding of guilty or not guilty by the jury.

Witness

A person who gives evidence in court. *See expert witness.*

Organisations and professions explained

This section lists and explains people and organisations that you may come in touch with.

Appeal Court

When the defence or the prosecution want to challenge the result from a magistrates' court or the Crown Court, cases are sent to the Appeal Court.

Attorney General's Office

The government office that is responsible for prosecutions and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Victims or relatives of a deceased victim can appeal to this office if they think that an offender received a sentence that was too lenient.

Bereavement Advice Centre

Bereavement Advice Centre is a non-profit organisation that gives practical information and advice on the many procedures that face the bereaved after the death of someone close.

Citizens Advice, Citizens Advice Bureau

The national Citizens Advice and its local Citizens Advice Bureaux can help you resolve legal, money and other problems by providing free information and advice.

Community Legal Advice

A free and confidential advice service paid for by Legal Aid. All of their services are government funded.

Coroner, coroner's officers

A coroner is a qualified and experienced doctor or lawyer who has been appointed by a local authority to investigate sudden, unknown, unnatural or violent deaths. The

coroner will seek to establish the medical cause and the circumstances of the death.

The coroner's staff are known as coroner's officers. They work under the direction of the coroner and liaise with bereaved families, the emergency services, government agencies, doctors, hospitals and funeral directors.

Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC)

The Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) is the independent public body set up to investigate possible miscarriages of justice. The commission assesses whether convictions or sentences should be referred to the Court of Appeal.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA)

This authority offers compensation to bereaved relatives who have lost someone as a result of a criminal injury.

The criminal justice system

One of the biggest public services in England and Wales. It is made up of agencies such as the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, courts, prisons and probation who all work together to deliver criminal justice.

Crown Court

The Crown Court deals with all crime sent for trial by magistrates' courts. Cases for trial are heard before a judge and jury.

The Crown Court also acts as an Appeal Court for cases heard and dealt with by magistrates' courts.

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is the independent government body responsible for prosecuting criminal cases investigated by the police. The CPS decides whether there is enough evidence to take a case to court, and if it would be in the public interest. When the decision to prosecute has been taken, the *Crown Prosecutor* represents the CPS in court.

Crown Prosecutor

Crown Prosecutors are lawyers responsible for reviewing and potentially prosecuting criminal cases after a police investigation. They also advise the police on matters relating to criminal investigations.

In every case, the prosecutor must decide whether the evidence can be used and is reliable – and if the public interest requires a prosecution.

Although Crown Prosecutors work closely with the police, they are responsible to the *Crown Prosecution Service*.

Family Liaison Officer (FLO)

See *Police Family Liaison Officer*.

First Tier Tribunal (Mental Health)

Can order the discharge of a restricted mentally disordered patient from their treatment at a hospital.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

The government department that is responsible for all British embassies and high commissions, and helps any Britons abroad in an emergency.

Funeral Standards Council

A UK trade association for funeral directors offering services that follow its codes of practice.

General Register Office (GRO)

The General Register Office (GRO) is a public body responsible for registering all births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales.

Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS)

Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) is the government service that administers the civil, family and criminal courts in England and Wales. This covers Crown, county and magistrates' courts.

Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC)

Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is the government department responsible for collecting tax and strengthening the UK's borders.

Home Office

The Home Office is the government department responsible for all national issues such as crime and immigration.

Human Tissue Authority

The Human Tissue Authority regulates the removal, storage, use and disposal of human bodies, organs and tissue. Their processes are set out in the Human Tissue Act 2004.

Law Society

The Law Society represents, helps, protects and promotes solicitors across England and Wales.

Legal Services Commission

The Legal Services Commission runs the Legal Aid scheme in England and Wales. They provide information, advice and legal representation to anyone who is eligible for legal support.

Magistrates' court

The magistrates' courts form the cornerstone of the criminal justice system as 95% of all criminal cases are completed in these courts. Cases are usually heard by three magistrates (Justices of the Peace) and one court clerk.

National Association of Funeral Directors

A UK trade association for funeral directors offering services that follow their codes of practice.

National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors

A UK trade association for funeral directors offering services that follow their codes of practice.

Natural Death Centre

The Natural Death Centre is a charity providing independent funeral advice – especially advice and support on family-organised, environmentally friendly funerals, and natural burial grounds.

National Offender Management Service (NOMS)

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) manages the offender from start to finish. This replaces the current system where responsibility for offenders is split between the probation and prison services.

National Probation Service

The National Probation Service's work has two main strands:

- To continuously assess and manage the risk and dangerousness of offenders.
- To provide expert supervision programmes that are designed to reduce reoffending.

Office of Communications (Ofcom)

Ofcom is the independent regulator for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services.

Parole Board

The Parole Board is an independent body that works with its criminal justice partners on risk-assessing prisoners to decide whether they can be safely released from prison.

Police Family Liaison Officer (FLO)

A Police Family Liaison Officer (FLO) is a specially trained police investigator who works with the investigation team. A bereaved family will normally have two FLOs appointed to the case so that they can be kept updated about the investigation.

Prison Service

The Prison Service is responsible for the imprisonment of those committed by the courts. Their duty is to oversee prisoners and, if released, enable them to lead law-abiding and useful lives after their release.

Probate Registry

The Probate Registry issues Grant of Representation – this gives a person the legal rights to administer a deceased person's estate (their money or possessions).

Probation Service

See *National Probation Service*.

Registrar of Deaths

See *General Register Office*.

Senior Investigating Officer (SIO)

A senior detective – specially trained in investigating homicide cases – who leads the investigation team.

Tribunals Service

The Tribunals Service considers appeals against decisions made by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA). Formerly known as the Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel (CICAP).

Victim Support

A national, independent charity whose trained volunteers help people who have been affected by crime. Their services are free, confidential and available to everyone.

Victim Liaison Officer (VLO)

See *Victim Liaison Unit*.

Victim Liaison Unit

A Victim Liaison Unit helps bereaved families or victims who have been involved in a serious crime. Each victim or bereaved family is assigned a Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) who is able to give information about the offender's progress through the prison system. The VLO is also able to pass on vital information about the feelings and views of the victim, risk issues and case details.

Witness Care Unit (WCU)

The Witness Care Unit is the single point of contact for victims, witnesses and the bereaved throughout the court process. They give regular updates about the progress of their case, make any arrangements for going to court, and offer support during the court process.

Witness Service

Provides free and confidential information and support to witnesses, victims and their families in every magistrates' and Crown court in England and Wales. The Witness Service is run by *Victim Support*.

Young offender institution

A prison for young people between the ages of 15 and 21 (16 to 21 for girls). In a young offender institution, juveniles – offenders under 18 – have to be kept separate from 18 to 21-year-old offenders.

Youth Offending Team (YOT)

A Youth Offending Team is made up of people from the same local authority area: representatives from the police, probation, social services, health, education, drugs and alcohol misuse and housing officers. Their primary role is to assess youth offenders and identify suitable programmes to prevent further offending.

8 Your section

Your notes 149

Your diary 152

Your contacts 154

Your notes

This section includes blank sheets for you to make your own notes.

In *Your diary*, it may be useful to write down the details of any meetings that you are attending or court times.

In *Your contacts*, you may want to note down the details of any people you come into contact with during the investigation or the court process.

9 Support and advice

General	156
Coping with loss	157
Getting counselling and psychotherapy	163
If you have lost a partner	166
If you have lost a child or a young person	169
If you are a child who has lost a close relative or if you're worried about a child	172
If you were affected by a sudden and violent or traumatic bereavement	177
If you were bereaved because of a traffic accident	183
If you have been affected by a suicide	186
If you feel that the offender was unjustly acquitted	188
If you were bereaved because of medical negligence	189
If you were bereaved because of a breakdown of community care	190
If the deceased died during service with the British Armed Forces	191
If you were bereaved because of a disaster, such as a terrorist attack, or a transport or natural disaster	192
If the deceased died when in custody	193

Support and advice

Losing a friend or family member can leave you with a wide range of emotions. You may feel distressed, upset, angry or frightened. Everyone's reaction to death is different, and there is no one way to feel or to deal with those feelings.

You may want to deal with these emotions alone or with close family or friends. But if you want someone else's support or advice, there are many agencies whose trained staff or volunteers can help you.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive. There are many other organisations, charities and self-help groups that are available to support you. Check your phone directory for local service providers.

Please also note that these organisations, charities and self-help groups work independently – the Ministry of Justice is not responsible for the service they provide.

General

Directgov

Directgov is the official government website for citizens. It provides easy access to public services and information. For example, when you are trying to register a death, a simple, interactive tool can be found in the 'Government, citizens and rights' section of the website.

Go to: www.direct.gov.uk

Healthtalkonline and youthhealthtalk

Healthtalkonline and youthhealthtalk are charity websites that contain videos, interviews and user forums. They allow you to share your experiences with other people, exchange information and get support.

Go to: www.healthtalkonline.org and
www.youthhealthtalk.org

Metropolitan Police

The Metropolitan Police website gives bereavement information for family and friends. You can find this in the A–Z index under 'Bereavement advice'.

Go to: www.met.police.uk

Coping with loss

Victim Support

Victim Support is a national charity which helps people affected by crime. Their trained volunteers and specialist staff provide a free and confidential service of practical help and emotional support all over the country. They can also put you in touch with your local Victim Support office.

Write to:

Victim Support National Centre
Hallam House
56–60 Hallam Street
London W1W 6JL

Call: 0845 30 30 900 *Lines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm, weekends 9am to 7pm, bank holidays 9am to 5pm*

Go to: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Witness Service

The Witness Service is a free and confidential service run by Victim Support which helps witnesses, victims and their families before, during and after a trial.

Their trained volunteers give emotional support and practical information about court proceedings. This includes a visit to the court, where it may be possible to view a courtroom. They will also offer support on the day of a court hearing. To get in touch with the Witness Service, contact your local Victim Support service (see details above) or your local court.

National Victims' Association (NVA)

The National Victims' Association (NVA) offers support to families bereaved by murder throughout the United Kingdom. They also campaign and advocate for victims' rights.

Write to:

NVA
PO Box 111
Jarrow
Tyne and Wear NE32 5TE

Call: 0191 423 2210 or 0777 564 6193 (mobile)

Email: info@victimsfirst.co.uk

Go to: www.victimsfirst.co.uk

The Samaritans

The Samaritans provide confidential, non-judgemental emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide.

They offer their services by phone, email, letter and face to face in most of their branches 24 hours a day.

Write to:

Chris
PO Box 9090
Stirling FK8 2SA

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Go to: www.samaritans.org

Call: 08457 90 90 90

Text: 07725 90 90 90

Minicom: 08457 90 91 92 (for the deaf or hard of hearing)

NHS Direct

NHS Direct is a confidential helpline, available 24 hours a day. All callers are routed to a local service desk.

Call: 0845 4647

Go to: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care

The national Cruse Bereavement Care promotes the well-being of bereaved people, and enables them to understand their grief and cope with their loss. The organisation provides counselling and support, and offers information, advice, education and training services through:

- a helpline
- information on what to do after a death
- leaflets and publications about bereavement
- bereavement support and advice in a network of local branches
- training in bereavement care for volunteers and professionals
- a specialist bookshop.

Call: 0844 477 9400

Go to: www.cruse.org.uk

For young people the agency also has a free phone helpline and interactive website.

Call: 0808 808 1677

Go to: www.rd4u.org.uk

Help the Aged

Help the Aged is a charity fighting poverty, isolation and neglect among older people. It offers information, advice and community services, including online and printed advice about bereavement.

Write to:

Help the Aged
207–221 Pentonville Road
London N1 9UZ

Call: 020 7278 1114

Email: info@helptheaged.org.uk

Go to: www.helptheaged.org.uk

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is a Christian charity with a strong social conscience, seeking to alleviate distress wherever it is found.

Their officers are trained in providing pastoral and other support for the bereaved, both church members and people in the local community.

Contact the national organisation for details of their local groups.

Call: 020 7367 4500

Go to: www.salvationarmy.org.uk

The Candle Project

The Candle Project is part of St Christopher's Hospice, a registered charity which provides free one-to-one and group bereavement support for children, young people and families in the South East London area.

It also offers a phone advice service for parents, carers and professionals nationwide.

Call: 020 8768 4500

Muslim Community Helpline

The Muslim Community Helpline is the successor to the Muslim Women's Helpline (MWHL). Former MWHL staff now provide emotional support and counselling, referrals and practical help to members of the Muslim community.

Write to:

MCH
PO Box 803
Harrow HA1 9DY

Call: 020 8904 8193 or 020 8908 6715 *Lines open Monday to Friday 10am to 1pm – sometimes extended to 3pm, depending on staff availability*

Community languages are available (sometimes on a call-back basis for Arabic, Turkish and Bengali).

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual Bereavement Helpline

The bereavement helpline offers support and practical information to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered callers who have been bereaved. Their trained volunteers also welcome calls from affected family, friends, colleagues and carers.

All calls are handled in the strictest confidence and they cannot trace your call.

Call: 020 7403 5969 *Lines are open Tuesday 7.30pm to 9.30pm*

Getting counselling and psychotherapy

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

For free information on counselling services in your area and a list of counsellors available. If you have any questions about the process of counselling, ask for the Client Information Helpdesk.

Write to:

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
15 St John's Business Park
Lutterworth
Leicestershire LE17 4HB

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Call:

For counselling services in your area: 01788 550 899
For a list of counsellors: 01455 883300

Go to: www.bacp.co.uk

For a list of counsellors, select the Find a Therapist directory.

ASSIST Trauma Care

ASSIST Trauma Care is a charity working in the specialist area of psychological trauma. Their specially trained therapists employ evidence-based, trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to help individuals and families affected by a traumatic occurrence.

The therapy takes place at the ASSIST offices in Rugby or at other locations by arrangement. They also offer support through their helpline.

Call:

Appointments: 01788 551919

Helpline: 01788 560800

Email: assist@traumatic-stress.freeserve.co.uk

Go to: www.assisttraumacare.org.uk

Asian Family Counselling Service

The Asian Family Counselling Service offers a dedicated counselling service to members of the Asian community.

Write to:

Asian Family Counselling Service

Suite 51

Windmill Place

2–4 Windmill Lane

Southall

London UB2 4NJ

Call: 020 8813 9714

Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service

The Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service offers emotional help and support to bereaved members of the Jewish community throughout North and North West London.

Write to:

The Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service
Bet Meir
44b Albert Road
London NW4 2SG

Call: 020 8457 9710

Email: jbcs@jvisit.org.uk

If you have lost a partner

A Different Journey, Care for the Family

A Different Journey is a project run by the nationwide charity Care for the Family. It is staffed entirely by people who have been bereaved of a partner at a young age, and offers support through:

- day and weekend events for individuals and families
- a telephone befriender scheme
- a regular newsletter via email
- website support.

Write to:

A Different Journey
Care for the Family
Garth House
Leon Avenue
Cardiff CF15 7RG

Call: 029 2081 0800

Email: adifferentjourney@cff.org.uk

Go to: www.careforthefamily.org.uk/adj

National Association of Widows and Widowers

The National Association of Widows and Widowers offers support, information and advice.

Write to:

National Association of Widows and Widowers
48 Queens Road
Coventry CV1 3EH

Call: 024 7663 4848 or 0845 838 2261

Email: info@nawidows.org.uk

Go to: www.nawidows.org.uk

WAY Foundation (Widowed and Young)

The WAY Foundation offers support and friendship to bereaved men and women under the age of 50 who have lost a partner – in whatever way, and however long ago. The organisation aims to provide a social and support network to help young widows and widowers rebuild their lives after the death of a partner. Members' children are welcomed too.

The foundation offers the following practical support to all members:

- a regular newsletter
- local social activities in most regions for adults, children and families
- a secure, online message board and chatroom for members
- weekend trips and holidays across the UK
- information on other organisations
- counselling groups
- helpful books available to borrow.

Write to:

The WAY Foundation
Suite 35, St Loyes House
20 St Loyes Street
Bedford MK40 1ZL

Call: 0870 011 3450

Email: info@wayfoundation.org.uk

If you have lost a child or a young person

Bereaved Parents' Network

The Bereaved Parents' Network is a project run by the nationwide charity Care for the Family. It is staffed entirely by people who have been bereaved of a child at any age and in any circumstance, and offers support through:

- day and weekend events for parents and for families
- a telephone befriender scheme
- a regular e-newsletter.

Write to:

Bereaved Parents' Network
Care for the Family
Garth House
Leon Avenue
Cardiff CF15 7RG

Call: 029 2081 0800

Email: bpn@cff.org.uk

Go to: www.careforthefamily.org.uk/bpn

The Child Death Helpline

The Child Death Helpline provides emotional support for anyone affected by the death of a child – whatever their age, under whatever circumstances.

The helpline is staffed by bereaved parent volunteers (not counsellors), who are trained and supported by a professional team.

Call: 0800 282 986 *Lines are open Monday to Sunday 7pm to 10pm, Monday, Thursday and Friday 10am to 1pm, Tuesday and Wednesday 10am to 4pm.*

Email: contact@childdeathhelpline.org

Go to: www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

The Child Bereavement Charity

The Child Bereavement Charity (CBC) is a national charity which gives support to grieving families and the professionals who care for them. Their information and support helpline offers a confidential listening and signposting service to anyone affected by the death of a child. Their website includes:

- forums for families and professionals
- articles and best practice guidelines (free to download)
- a searchable database of local and national support organisations
- a comprehensive listing of relevant books and resources.

They also offer specialised training and support for professionals wanting to improve their response to the needs of bereaved families.

Write to:

The Child Bereavement Charity
Aston House
West Wycombe
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire HP14 3AG

Call: 01494 446648

Email: enquiries@childbereavement.org.uk

Go to: www.childbereavement.org.uk

The Compassionate Friends

The Compassionate Friends is an organisation of bereaved parents and their families helping each other through their grief. They give support, friendship and advice to parents and families after the death of their child – whatever the age or cause.

Call:

Helpline: 0845 123 2304 *Lines are open from 10am to 4pm
and from 6.30pm to 10.30pm*

Office number: 0845 120 3785

Email:

Help: helpline@tcf.org.uk

Office: info@tcf.org.uk

Go to: www.tcf.org.uk

If you are a child who has lost a close relative or if you're worried about a child

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

The NSPCC offers free advice and support to anyone concerned about the welfare of a child, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Calls to their helpline are dealt with by counsellors who are trained child protection officers.

Write to:

NSPCC Helpline
Weston House
42 Curtain Road
London EC2A 3NH

Call: 0808 800 5000

Textphone: 0800 056 0566

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Go to: www.nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC Asian Helpline

The NSPCC Asian Helpline is available in various languages, and offers free advice and support to anyone concerned about the welfare of a child.

Call: 0800 096 7719 (English-speaking line) Helplines are also available in the following languages:

- Bengali: 0800 096 7714
- Gujarati: 0800 096 7715
- Hindi: 0800 096 7716
- Punjabi: 0800 096 7717
- Urdu: 0800 096 7718

All lines are open Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Go to: www.nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC Cymru, Wales Child Protection Helpline

The NSPCC Cymru offers free advice and support to anyone concerned about the welfare of a child. A bilingual service is also available.

Call: 0808 100 2524 *Lines are open Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm*

Textphone: 0808 100 1033

Email: helpcymru@nspcc.org.uk

ChildLine

ChildLine is the UK's free, 24-hour helpline for children and young people in distress or danger. It is a service provided by the NSPCC. Their trained counsellors comfort, listen and advise.

Write to:

ChildLine
Weston House
42 Curtain Road
London EC2A 3NH

If you are a child or a young person:

Freepost NATN 1111
London E1 6BR

Call: 0800 1111 *Lines are open 24 hours a day and calls are free.*

Textphone: 0800 400 222 *Lines are open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 9.30pm, weekends 9.30am to 8pm*

Go to: www.childline.org.uk

The Line – for any young person living away from home

Call: 0800 88 44 44 *Lines are open Monday to Friday 3.30pm to 9.30pm, weekends 2pm to 8pm. Calls are free.*

Winston's Wish

Winston's Wish is a national service which helps children rebuild their lives after the death of a parent or sibling, enabling them to face the future with hope. It also offers practical support and guidance to families, professionals and anyone concerned about a grieving child. Their work is important to help children avoid the problems that can occur in later life if they are unable to express their grief. The service provides:

- a national helpline for anyone concerned about a grieving child
- specialist group work for families bereaved through suicide, murder or manslaughter
- an interactive website
- specially designed creative resources
- consultancy and training to a wide range of professionals
- research into the most effective interventions for bereaved families.

Write to:

Winston's Wish
Westmoreland House
80–86 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL53 7JT

Call: 08452 03 04 05 (helpline) *Lines open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm*
01242 515157 (for general enquiries)

Email: info@winstonswish.org.uk

Go to: www.winstonswish.org.uk

Voice UK

Voice UK offers support and information to adults and children with learning difficulties who have experienced crime, and their families and carers. They also campaign for changes in the law and practice that concern those with learning difficulties.

Write to:

Voice UK
Kelvin House
RTC Business Park
Derby DE24 8UP

Call:

Helpline: 0845 122 8695
Information: 01332 291042
Textphone: 0779 7800642

Email: voiceuk@voiceuk.org.uk

Go to: www.voiceuk.org.uk

If you were affected by a sudden and violent or traumatic bereavement

Escaping Victimhood

The Escaping Victimhood programme aims to support those suffering the long-term effects of the trauma of a sudden and violent bereavement. The programme is set in a comfortable environment, away from daily life and in the company of people with similar experiences. Its activities include:

- the opportunity to learn about the impact of trauma
- workshops on personal change – these help you to locate the traumatic event within the context of your life's journey, and provide some tools for self-help
- group work such as painting or photography – this will give you new ways of expressing your experience
- one-to-one counselling and therapy.

The programme is made up of an introductory evening, a residential workshop and a follow-up day.

Email: Tim Newell at newelltim@hotmail.com

Mothers Against Murder And Aggression (MAMAA)

MAMAA is a national registered charity which provides support to families and friends bereaved through murder, manslaughter and unlawful killing.

They are licensed weapons awareness trainers and go into schools, young offender institutions and youth clubs, talking to young people about the dangers and consequences of carrying and using weapons. They also work with a programme called Life Skills for Children which targets children from the age of five.

MAMAA works closely with many other groups throughout the UK to help to raise awareness of the difficulties facing families of murder victims and the importance of giving these families support as soon as possible. They are part of the Home Secretary's round table advisory panel on guns, gangs and knives and have worked with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) on the criminal use of firearms.

Families wishing to tell their story in their own words or with pictures should contact MAMAA.

Call: 07960 994 862

Email: mamaa.uk@hotmail.com

Go to: www.mamaa.org

KnifeCrimes.org

The sudden death of a teenager is particularly traumatic for parents, as well as siblings and grandparents.

KnifeCrimes.org offers emotional and practical support through an online resource and nationwide support network. They also campaign to achieve better rights for victims of violent crime.

Write to:

KnifeCrimes.org
PO Box 10285
Colchester CO1 9HQ

Call: 079 13 584260

Go to: www.knifecrimes.org

Support after Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM)

SAMM offers help and support to families and friends who have been bereaved through murder and manslaughter. All of their support volunteers have been bereaved in a similar way. SAMM is also involved in training, research and raising public awareness. They also work to increase the understanding of organisations working with bereaved families – particularly with the criminal justice system.

Write to:

SAMM National Office
1st Floor, Scotia House
33 Finsbury Square
London EC2A 1PL

Call: 0845 872 3440

Email: samm@victimsupport.org.uk

Go to: www.samm.org.uk

Support after Murder and Manslaughter Abroad (SAMM Abroad)

SAMM Abroad is a British support group for people who were bereaved through murder or manslaughter abroad. The group is made up of people who have been bereaved in a similar way.

SAMM Abroad offers practical and emotional support, and holds regional meetings to enable families to share their experiences and offer support to each other.

Call: 0845 123 2384

Email: info@sammabroad.org

Go to: www.sammabroad.org

Victims of Crime Trust

The Victims of Crime Trust supports anyone who has been bereaved through homicide. The trust provides initial advocacy assistance to victims when they are too vulnerable to cope with the tragedy by themselves, supporting them until they are stronger.

Their holistic support package offers:

- personal and familial support
- legal advice (including claims for compensation)
- counselling (bereavement, psychological, marital)
- assisting with court attendance (including accommodation)
- referral to specialist agencies (such as housing, social services, retraining)

- respite breaks
- practical support
- media representation (if appropriate)
- social support network (with other families bereaved by homicide)
- voluntary participation in the trust's operations
- follow-up support
- educational and awareness programmes
- repatriation of bodies of those murdered abroad and assistance to the families involved.

Write to:

Victims of Crime Trust
2 York Street
Twickenham
Middlesex TW1 3LE

Call: 020 8744 0999 (office number with answer service)

Email: info@victimsofcrimetrust.com

Go to: www.voc.webeden.co.uk

Victims' Voice

Victims'Voice is an umbrella charity which addresses the issues that arise when people are bereaved by sudden and traumatic death and have to cope with the involvement of police, coroners, mortuaries, hospitals and the courts.

Victims' Voice publishes two homicide case booklets:

- *Sudden Death and the Coroner*
To order this booklet, email vv@coroner-info.org.uk or call 07984 078 918. Make sure that you state how many copies you need and your full postal address, including postcode.
- *Coroner's Post Mortem and Inquests*
To order this booklet, see contact details below.

They also publish the information booklet *Information for Suddenly Bereaved People*. This booklet is written from the perspective of bereaved people and includes information about the specialist charities offering support and guidance. It is available, free of charge, in quantities of two or more. To order this booklet, see contact details below.

Write to:

Victims'Voice
PO Box 21
Fairford
Gloucestershire GL7 4WX

Call: 07984 078918 *Please speak slowly and clearly, and give best time for them to call back*

Email: victimsvoice@hotmail.com

Go to: www.victimsvoice.co.uk

If you were bereaved because of a traffic accident

BrakeCare

BrakeCare is a division of Brake, the national road safety charity. BrakeCare supports people who have been bereaved and injured in road crashes through their helpline and a range of literature. They also assist professionals working with road crash victims.

You may find these guides helpful:

- *Information and advice for bereaved families and friends following a road death* (versions available for England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland)
- *Advice for victims, families and friends following a serious injury in a road crash* (versions available for England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland)
- *Someone has died in a road crash* – a child bereavement guide for adults and children to read together

Call: 0845 603 8570 (if you reach an answer phone, leave a message saying when you would like to be called back)

Email: helpline@brake.org.uk

Go to: www.brake.org.uk

RoadPeace

RoadPeace is the national charity for road crash victims with local groups around the country. It offers emotional and practical support to those bereaved and injured in crashes. Their trained volunteers have all been bereaved or injured or are carers for family members injured in crashes.

RoadPeace offers:

- a befriender network
- information sheets that explain the post-crash legal procedures
- a number of key publications, such as the *Road Death Investigation Guide* and *Civil Compensation after a Road Death*
- a newsletter
- local groups
- many acts of remembrance, including the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

RoadPeace also campaigns to improve the support available to road crash victims, and for more priority to be given to reducing road death and injury.

Call: 0845 4500 355 *Lines are open Monday to Saturday, 9am to 5pm. Assistance is also possible in French, Spanish, German and Polish.*

Email: info@roadpeace.org

Go to: www.roadpeace.org

Campaign Against Drinking and Driving (CADD) and Support and Care After Road Death and Injury (SCARD)

The Campaign Against Drinking and Driving (CADD) supports all victims of drunk or drugged drivers throughout the UK.

Support and Care After Road Death and Injury (SCARD) is a registered charity which gives emotional and practical support to people affected by road tragedies all over the UK.

The two charities give or offer access to:

- free legal advice from their vastly experienced legal representatives
- a confidential helpline giving support and assistance
- counselling, which in many cases will be low cost or free
- workshops to educate people about the dangers of driving under the influence of drink or drugs
- a yearly memorial service for road collision victims
- free internet memorials for victims and their families.

They also campaign to put the effects of drunk and drugged driving to the forefront of public and government attention.

Write to:

CADD or SCARD
PO Box 62
Brighthouse
West Yorkshire HD6 3YY

Call:

Helpline: 0845 123 5542 *Lines are open every day 9am to 9pm*
Office: 0845 123 5541 *Office open 9am to 5pm*

CADD

Email: info@cadd.org.uk

Go to: www.cadd.org.uk

SCARD

Email: info@scard.org.uk

Go to: www.scard.org.uk

If you have been affected by a suicide

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS)

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS) offers support to those bereaved by the suicide of a close relative or friend. They aim to provide a safe, confidential environment where the bereaved can share their experiences and feelings.

Support is available through:

- a helpline
- support group meetings around the country
- support days
- residential events.

Write to:

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide
National Office
The Flamsteed Centre
Albert Street
Ilkeston
Derbyshire DE7 5GU

Call:

Helpline: 0844 561 6855 *Lines are open every day 9am to 9pm*

Minicom (deaf or hard of hearing): 01925 826204 (Brenda
– also email: brendamyall5@aol.com)

Typetalk: 18002 – 01925 826204

Office: 0115 944 1117

Email:

Office: sobs.admin@care4free.net

For a Welsh speaker: email robertjames180@hotmail.co.uk

For lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered questions: email
suzziholden@yahoo.co.uk, or call 07773 382145

Go to: www.uk-sobs.org.uk

If you feel that the offender was unjustly acquitted

Justice After Acquittal (JAA)

Justice After Acquittal (JAA) campaigns for legal rights and support for victims' families following an unjust acquittal after a murder trial. Their founders are Carole Longe and Ann Roberts.

Write to:

Justice After Acquittal
PO Box 72
Failsworth
Manchester M35 0XE

Call: 07902 929379

If you were bereaved because of medical negligence

Death After Medical Negligence (DAMN)

Death After Medical Negligence (DAMN) offers support to families who may have lost someone through medical negligence – even though the cause of death was given as ‘natural causes’. DAMN was formerly Rigorous Analysis of Iatrogenic Death (RAID).

Contact Mrs Lilly Lewy

Call: 020 8205 4985

Email: lh1005@londonmet.ac.uk

If you were bereaved because of a breakdown of community care

Zito Trust

The Zito Trust provides advice and support to the victims of community care breakdown. The trust also campaigns towards the reform of mental health policy and law.

Call: 01497 820011 (answer service)

Email: zitotrust@btinternet.com

Go to: www.zitotrust.co.uk

If the deceased died during service with the British Armed Forces

SSAFA Forces Help

SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association) Forces Help offers practical and emotional support to those who have lost a loved one during service with the British Armed Forces. SSAFA also provides:

- a confidential support line
- an independent, mutual support group open to all those affected by loss
- a local network of branches offering financial support for dependants suffering hardship.

Write to:

Jane Barnes
SSAFA Forces Help
19 Queen Elizabeth Street
London SE1 2LP

Call: 020 7403 8783 or 0800 731 4880 (for the confidential support line)

Email: jane.b@ssafa.org.uk

Go to: www.ssafa.org.uk

If you were bereaved because of a disaster, such as a terrorist attack, or a transport or natural disaster

Disaster Action

Disaster Action was founded by survivors and bereaved people from a wide variety of disasters, including terrorist attacks, and transport and natural disasters.

They work to:

- promote greater understanding of the needs of individuals following a major emergency
- facilitate the coming together of self-determining family groups or survivor support groups
- offer support and guidance through their leaflet series 'When Disaster Strikes' to guide you through the aftermath – these leaflets can be downloaded from their website.

Disaster Action does not offer a counselling service, but can suggest where to go for further support.

Call: 01483 799066 *The office is open on a part-time basis – outside office hours there is an answer phone*

Go to: www.disasteraction.org.uk

If the deceased died when in custody

Inquest

Inquest operates a casework service for those bereaved after a death in the custody of the police or prison, in psychiatric detention or involving immigration services. They also offer advice to bereaved families or friends facing an inquest in England and Wales through an information pack.

Write to:

Inquest
89–93 Fonthill Road
London N4 3JH

Call: 020 7263 1111 *Lines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm – outside these hours you can leave a message and someone will call you back as soon as possible*

Email: inquest@inquest.org.uk

Go to: www.inquest.org.uk



Criminal Justice System: working together for the public

Published by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform in March 2009.

Product code: BEREAVINFO/09/E Reference: 291974

www.cjsonline.gov.uk



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