

## ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

VWCU works closely with Victim Support NI. VSNI representatives are based within the VWCU and can provide immediate advice and emotional support by telephone. They can also make a referral to a VSNI Community Office for further help such as counselling or assistance with making a compensation claim. VWCU also works with NSPCC Young Witness Service who can provide support to young victims and witnesses.

## GETTING IN TOUCH

VWCU operates from two locations which provide services to victims and witnesses involved in criminal cases heard in Crown, Magistrates' and Youth Courts throughout Northern Ireland. Your case officer will give you their name and contact details, but you can also contact VWCU using the details given below.

### **VWCU Belfast**

Belfast Chambers, 93 Chichester Street,  
Belfast BT1 3JR

Telephone: **028 9026 4690**

Textphone: **07825 118389**

Email: **[vwcubelfast@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:vwcubelfast@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk)**

### **VWCU Belfast has responsibility for the following areas:**

Antrim and Newtownabbey  
Belfast  
Down  
Lisburn and Castlereagh  
Mid and East Antrim  
North Down and Ards

### **VWCU Foyle**

Foyle Chambers  
35 Limavady Road  
Londonderry  
BT47 6LP

Telephone: **028 7134 0632**

Textphone: **07825118416**

Email: **[vwcufoyle@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:vwcufoyle@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk)**

### **VWCU Foyle has responsibility for the following areas:**

Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon  
Causeway Coast and Glens  
Derry and Strabane  
Fermanagh and Omagh  
Mid Ulster  
Newry and Mourne



KEEPING YOU INFORMED





## The Role of the Victim and Witness Care Unit

The Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU) provides a single point of contact within the criminal justice system. Its primary role is to keep victims and witnesses fully informed of the progress of their case throughout the criminal justice process. The VWCU can also make referrals to other service providers if additional support is required.

## Single Point of Contact

A named case officer will be appointed to each case. They will act as your single point of contact from when an investigation or charge file is submitted to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), through to and including the outcome of any court proceedings.

## How VWCU Will Communicate With You

Your case officer will communicate with you using your preferred means of contact and at a preferred time of day where possible. This includes by telephone, letter or email.

## If You Are a Victim We Will:

- Tell you when a charge file or the full investigation file has been submitted to the PPS;
- Where appropriate, tell you if a defendant is granted bail or their bail conditions are significantly changed;
- Notify you when a decision is taken by a prosecutor in your case;
- Provide you with information about making a Victim Personal Statement;
- Tell you about relevant court hearings including those you are not required to attend;
- Keep you updated at key stages of your case;
- Give you details of any court outcome and sentence, as appropriate;
- Tell you if the defendant appeals against their conviction or sentence, and tell you the outcome of any appeals.

If you are a bereaved relative or the next of kin of a person who has died and who was involved in the case, VWCU will keep you updated on the progress of the case. Your case officer can communicate directly with you or if you prefer through your Family Liaison Officer, if one has been appointed.

## If You Are a Witness We Will:

- Tell you if you will be required to give evidence;
  - Tell you the location, dates and times of relevant court hearings;
  - Provide information on the facilities available at all court locations;
  - Give you the information you need to help prepare for attending court to give evidence;
  - Conduct and review Needs Assessments as the case progresses, to help provide you with the specific support and guidance you need;
  - Give you information about Special Measures which can be granted by the court to help you give your best evidence if you are vulnerable and/or intimidated;
  - Make a direct referral to Victim Support NI (VSNI) or to NSPCC Young Witness Service, with your consent;
  - Arrange for an interpreter to be present at court to help you, if English is not your first language;
  - Give you information about claiming for expenses you may incur in attending court.
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