



NSPCC



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The
Children's
Society

28 May 2026

Catherine Atkinson MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Victims and Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
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Implement the victim-related measures in the Victims and Prisoners Act

Dear Minister Atkinson,

Firstly, we would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for Victims and Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls. We look forward to working with you closely.

We are writing to you following the second anniversary of the Victims and Prisoners Act receiving Royal Assent to urge you to implement the remaining victim-related measures in the Act. In particular, the government must commence Sections 6-15, which relate to compliance with the Victims' Code and the duty on relevant authorities to collaborate when commissioning victim support services, without delay.

The Victims' Code is a vital document for adult and child victims of crime, setting out their key rights and the level of service they should expect from criminal justice agencies.

However, evidence clearly shows that too often these rights exist only on paper and are not being delivered in practice. This leaves victims without access to the information and support that they not only need, but to which they are entitled.

A survey undertaken by Victim Support in 2023, for example, found that 60% of victims did not receive a clear explanation of what to expect from the criminal justice system after reporting a crime; 42% of victims were not informed about the decision not to investigate or prosecute the suspect, and given an explanation as to why, within five working days; and 44% of victims were not given a chance to make a Victim Personal Statement. The Victims' Commissioner's [Annual Victims Survey 2024](#) also found that only 27% of victims recalled being referred to specialist support services.

In addition, the IICSA Changemakers [reported](#) in 2024 that only 50% of their Survivor Advisor Community had heard of the Victims' Code. And calls to the NSPCC also suggest that awareness of the Code amongst young victims continues to be low with few children and young people aware of the rights it provides.

Historically, compliance with the Code has not been consistently monitored or enforced. Criminal justice agencies have rarely been held accountable for failing to provide victims with their rights, creating little incentive to deliver on the Code, and no effective means to identify failures.

The Victims and Prisoners Act rightly sought to address this. However, while the Act received Royal Assent two years ago, these measures have not yet been commenced.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales consistently reports over 6 million incidents of police recorded crime each year. That means it is likely that hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of victims have potentially missed out on their rights being delivered over the last two years, while the legislation designed to enforce those rights gathers dust.

The government has now consulted on changes to the Code, meaning the time is right to commence the related measures from the Victims and Prisoners Act.

The Act also introduced a joint statutory duty on Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), and tier one local authorities to collaborate when commissioning support services for victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and other serious violence.

The duty is intended to streamline victim support services, improve commissioning by gathering insight on local need and existing provision, and increase decision-making transparency. We believe these are important and welcome aims, and that the duty has the potential to significantly improve local commissioning practice.

The government should waste no further time in implementing the duty, and also in providing clarity on how it will operate following the planned abolition of PCCs in 2028. The adult and children victims' sectors will be critical to the duty's success and must be meaningfully engaged throughout this transition.

Two years after the Victims and Prisoners Act received Royal Assent, victims are still waiting to see their rights delivered and their support services strengthened. This crucial legislation holds much promise for victims but, until it is brought into force, that promise remains unfulfilled.

We urge the government to commence Sections 6-15 of the Act and to engage closely with the victims' and children's sector on their implementation. Victims and survivors deserve nothing less.

We look forward to hearing from you and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Victim Support
NSPCC
SafeLives
Catch22
Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse
Action for Children
The Children's Society