

Victim Information and Advice (VIA)



Victim Information and advice known as VIA for short, it is a service for people who are **victims** or **witnesses** of a crime.



A **victim** is a person who has had a crime happen to them.



A **witness** is a person who may know something about a crime that has happened. The witness can talk about it to the police and in sometimes in court.

VIA is here to help you



- We give you information and advice about how the Scottish criminal justice system works and what you can expect.



- We will let you know how things are going on your case.



- We will put you in touch with other services that can help.



- If your close relative has died as a result of a crime then we give you information about what will happen in the case.

More about VIA



- VIA is part of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service known as COPFS for short.



- In Scotland the COPFS decide whether there is enough information to **charge** someone accused of a crime.

COPFS think about the information and decide if that person should go to court.



- Victim Information Advice staff are not **lawyers**. We help victims, witnesses and close relatives. We help if your close relative has died unexpectedly and the police are finding out why this has happened.



A **charge** is made when the Crown Prosecution Service say that they think a person has done a crime and should go to court.



A **lawyer** is a person trained in the law and speaks in court.

Other ways the VIA can help



Some people may need extra support if they are a victim or witness. We help with this.



- We help with access into court or give you support to give **evidence**.



- We arrange for you to visit the court so that you know what to expect if the case goes to **trial**.



- If you need help, we find out if it is possible for you to give **evidence** in court in different ways.



- We help you with any questions or worries you have about being a victim or witness.



Evidence is the information used to decide if a person is guilty or not guilty of a crime.



A **trial** is a court case where **evidence** is listened to and **witnesses** asked to come to court to talk about the crime.

Contacting the VIA



If the VIA has written to you, phone the telephone number given in the letter.



Telephone on: **0300 020 3000**



Email: EnquiryPoint@copfs.gov.uk



Using the Victim and Information Advice (VIA) service is your choice.

If you are not sure about using our service then contact us to find out more.