



SFO

serious
fraud
office

Making a victim personal statement

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This booklet tells you about the type of information you might want to include in your statement and what we will do with the information you give us.

What is a victim personal statement?

A victim personal statement adds to the information you have already given us or the police in your statement about the crime. The victim personal statement gives you the chance to tell us about any support you might need, and how the crime has affected you (for example, the crime could have affected you physically, emotionally or financially).

Do I have to make a victim personal statement?

No. You should only make a victim personal statement if you want to. If you do not want to make a personal statement straightaway, you can always ask us to help you make one later on.

What happens if I don't make a victim personal statement?

It will not change the way we will inform or support you. Also, we will follow up your case whether or not you choose to make a victim personal statement.

What happens to my victim personal statement?

If you make a victim personal statement, it will become part of the case papers. This means it will be seen by everybody involved with your case (for example, the police, people here at the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), the defence and the judge at the court). You can use your victim personal statement to let us know that you would like to be kept informed about the progress of your case. The courts may use the information in your statement when deciding if a defendant should be given bail.

How does the SFO decide whether to prosecute somebody or not?

We follow the principles outlined in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. We have to be satisfied that there is enough evidence. If there is, then we will consider whether it is in the public interest to prosecute. Broadly speaking, the more serious the alleged offence, the more likely it will be that a prosecution will be needed in the public interest. When we are deciding whether it is in the public interest to prosecute an offender, we will consider the consequences for the victim(s) and will take account of the views of the victim(s) or their family.

Who decides how the offender is punished?

The judge decides how an offender is punished when he or she passes sentence. You should not offer any opinion on how the court should punish the offender. Although the court will not consider your opinion when they make a decision, they will take account of how the offence has affected you.

How can I make a victim personal statement?

You have made a statement if you have made a witness statement to us or the police. A witness statement (sometimes also called 'an evidential statement') is taken from a victim or a witness who can give information that might help solve a crime. When you are filling in your witness statement you will be asked if you want to fill in a victim personal statement.

If you have given your witness statement in a different way (for example, on a video recording), you may also be able to give your victim personal statement in the same way.

If you are a child or a vulnerable adult, your parent or carer can make the victim personal statement for you if you want them to.

What sort of information can I give?

You should use the victim personal statement to give us any information you did not include in the witness statement. You can say whatever you like in your personal statement. For example, you may want to tell us:

- if you want to be told about the progress of your case
- if you would like extra support (particularly if you are appearing as a witness at a trial)
- if you feel vulnerable or intimidated
- if you are worried about the offender being given bail (for example, if the offender knows who you are)
- how the crime has affected you, if you feel racial hostility was part of the crime
- how the crime has affected you, if you feel that you were victimised because of your faith, cultural background or disability
- if you feel you should be compensated by the offender for any injury, loss or damage you have suffered
- if the crime has caused, or made worse, any medical or social problems (such as marital problems) you may have
- anything else you think might be helpful or relevant.

Is there anything else I should know about when I make a victim personal statement?

When you have filled in a victim personal statement, it becomes part of the case papers. This means that if an offender is charged, the case papers have to be shown to the defendant and his or her lawyer. The defendant will see what you have said and, if the case goes to trial, you could be asked questions about the statement in court.

As a result, you should be ready to answer any questions about your statement. You could be asked about how the crime has affected you, or about any loss, injury or damage you have suffered. Once you have made a statement, you can't withdraw it or change it. However, you can always make another statement that clarifies or changes something you said in an earlier statement.

How can I update my personal statement?

If you did not make a victim personal statement when you made a witness statement and would now like to, or if you want to make a second statement describing the long-term effects of the crime, please contact the person named on page 7 of this booklet. They will arrange to take your personal statement.

Remember, you can update your personal statement at any point before the case gets to court.

The person from the SFO who takes your personal statement will make sure it becomes part of the case papers. This means it will be available to everybody who is involved with your case.

Will I get any feedback about my personal statement?

You will not get any direct feedback. However, your statement will be added to the case papers and will be read by all the criminal justice agencies involved with your case.



Who should I contact if I want more information?

If you need more information about a victim personal statement you have made, or would like to make, you should contact us or get in touch with the person whose name is on page 7 of this booklet.

You can also contact Victim Support for free and confidential support. Victim Support volunteers are specially trained to give practical help and emotional support to victims of crime and witnesses in court.

Your local Victim Support Scheme is listed in your local phone book, or you can contact the national Victim Support line on **0845 30 30 900**.

Contact page

If you want to contact the SFO about a victim personal statement, you should get in touch with:

Name:

Phone Number:

Fax:

Email:

It will help us if you quote this reference:

Contacting the Serious Fraud Office

If you believe that you have been the victim of a fraud there are a number of ways to contact the Serious Fraud Office. You can call the Fraud hotline on +44 (0)20 7239 7388 which is answered between 09:00 and 17:00. Out of hours messages can be left on the answering service. You can also contact us through our website www.sfo.gov.uk.

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