

VICTIM PERSONAL STATEMENT (VPS)

What is a Victim Personal Statement?

Your Victim Personal Statement gives you a voice in the criminal justice process. It allows you to tell the court and, where applicable, the parole board, how the crime has affected you, or your family. This could be physically, emotionally, financially or in any other way. It's different from a witness statement, which is about what you saw or heard at the time.

What your VPS can contain:

- Any physical or psychological harm that you have suffered
- If you no longer feel safe
- The impact on your family
- How your quality of life has changed on a day-to-day basis
- Any concerns about the alleged offender being given bail
- If you feel the crime was racially motivated or that your faith, sexuality or disability played a part in the crime
- If you need or are receiving additional support as a result of the crime
- If you intend to claim compensation from the offender for any injury, loss or damage

If the defendant is found guilty, you can read your statement aloud in court or have it read out on your behalf. When you make your VPS you are able to say whether or not you would like to have it read aloud or played (if recorded). You are also able to say whether you would like it read aloud by someone else. If your VPS is read aloud in court it could be reported by any media who may be present. If you are initially unsure about making a VPS when you are giving a witness statement about what happened, you may choose to make a VPS at a later time-provided this is before the case comes to court or the suspect is sentenced.

You can't change a VPS, once you've signed it, nor can you use it to say what punishment you think the defendant should receive. However, you can give the police another VPS if you want to add new information.

Your VPS will still be considered as part of the sentence before the court prior to sentencing if the defendant is found guilty.

What a VPS must not contain

Your VPS must not include your thoughts or opinion on how the alleged offender should be punished – this is for the magistrate or judge to decide. Any inappropriate content, such as unsubstantiated claims against the alleged offender, may be removed from the final version of the statement before the court.

At Beacon, we'll help you prepare your Victim Personal Statement.