



5

Probation Service Victims
Charter

5: Probation Service Victims Charter

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE PROBATION SERVICE

If you are a victim:

- we will prepare a victim impact report with you, when requested by the courts;
- we may invite you to take part in a family conference for a young offender and support you in this process; and
- we will explain the meaning of the different orders that we operate for the court, if you ask us to do so. We will do this by phone, in writing or face-to-face, depending on the circumstances.

The orders include the following:

- probation – in this case, the court places an offender under the supervision of a probation officer for up to three years. The probation order may contain conditions to prevent the person from repeating the same offence or committing other offences. These conditions may include attending a particular centre for addiction treatment, or taking part in an educational or vocational training course. An offender may have to return to court if they fail to keep to the conditions, and a new sentence may be given for the original offence;
- community service – in this instance, a court may order a person over 16 years of age to do unpaid work for between 40 and 240 hours. The work must be of benefit to the community and the person must complete it within one year. The Probation Service arranges and manages community service placements. If the person fails to complete the community service, we will arrange for the person to return to court;
- supervision during deferment of penalty – a court may decide to defer (that is, to put off until a later date) sentencing for a period of time of usually not more than one year, to allow the offender to look at issues related to the crime. During this time, the offender may have to stay under the supervision of the Probation Service;

- part suspended sentence supervision – where the court suspends the final part of a prison sentence, the court may place the person under the supervision of the Probation Service with a view to reducing reoffending. The person may also have to take part in a course of treatment or programme approved by the court. The court may set conditions to support the supervision;
- post-release supervision – the court may include in the sentence of a sex offender a period of post-release supervision by the Probation Service. Once again, the court may set out conditions to support the supervision; and
- community sanctions for young offenders – there are nine community sanctions which involve the Young Persons’ Probation section of the Probation Service. These include special types of probation orders, as well as community service, day centre and mentoring orders.

In our work with offenders, we will:

- strongly encourage offenders to take responsibility for the hurt, damage and suffering they may have caused you;
- make sure that offenders continue to address any lifestyle issue or attitude that has played a part in their offences against you;
- refer to the likely impact on victims when we prepare reports on offenders for the courts; and
- make sure that any community-based programmes are sensitive to your concerns and aim to prevent re-offending.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF WE DO NOT MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS

The Probation Service has in place a Victim Service Coordinator. If you have any queries, concerns or complaints in relation to victims, contact:

Ursula Fernee
 Assistant Principal Probation Officer
 Victim Service Coordinator
 The Probation Service
 Haymarket, Smithfield
 Dublin 7.

Tel: (01) 817 3631
 Fax: (01) 817 3644
 E-mail: ugfernee@probation.ie
 Website: www.pprobation.ie

ROLE OF THE PROBATION SERVICE

The Probation Service is an Agency within the Department of Justice and Law Reform. Our probation officers work with offenders across the country, as well as in prisons and detention centres, to make communities safer. We do this by helping offenders to lead better lives, free from crime and the harm it does.

Our role is to:

- provide a service to courts, including supervising offenders in the community;
- prepare reports on individual offenders, which include the impact of the offence on the victims(s)
- organise a family conference for a young offender, if the court orders us to do so; and
- put into practice programmes that aim to address offending behaviour and reduce victimisation.

We take into account the victim's feelings and trauma when we are carrying out our work.

(Edition: June, 2010)