

What is Victim Support?

Victim Support is the independent national charity that helps people find their strength again after crime. Our trained volunteers give free, confidential support and information to victims and witnesses.

Contact us

If you're a victim of sexual violence you don't have to suffer in silence. Victim Support can help. For more information, contact your local ISVA or Victim Care Unit (VCU):

ISVA
T: 01228 558 312
E: susanna.phillips@victimsupport.org.uk

VCU
T: 030 0303 1979
www.victimsupport.org.uk

Other useful numbers

Cumbria Police
0845 3300 247

In an emergency please call 999

Our Victim Supportline **0845 30 30 900** gives information and support for anyone affected by crime.

You can contact us using Text Relay by adding 18001 before any of our phone numbers.

Help us support other victims and witnesses. Text **VISU13** and an amount to **70070** to make a donation.

Published by Victim Support. Information in this leaflet is for local use and may not reflect services in other parts of the country.

President HRH The Princess Royal.

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Charity registration: 298028 Company no: 2158780
Registered in England. Limited by guarantee.
Registered office as above.

July 2011



Help for victims of sexual violence in Cumbria

find the strength

How sexual violence can affect you

People who have been affected by sexual violence can experience many short and long term emotional and physical effects. These can have a negative effect on their lives.

If you've been raped, sexually assaulted or abused you could feel numb, angry, scared, confused, guilty or lots of other emotions. You could have been injured or put at risk of pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases. Sexual violence can also affect your feelings about yourself and your relationships with others.

Everybody has their own way of coping; there is no right or wrong way to react to sexual violence.

Please remember that what happened wasn't your fault and you're not to blame for what another person did to you.

What are ISVAs?

Independent sexual violence advisors (ISVAs) give practical and emotional support to people who have been raped or sexually assaulted at any time in their life.

ISVAs are specially trained to respond sensitively to the needs of people who have experienced sexual violence, and will support you at your pace.

Rather than tell you what to do, your ISVA will guide you on the path forward. They can give you information to help explore what support and other options you have. They can help you make informed choices.

The ISVA is your advocate and will work with you to work out what kind of support (if any) you need. They will only give you the support you choose and will work with you for as long as you want.

The ISVA service is free.

What your ISVA can do

The ISVA can give face-to-face, telephone, text or email support. This includes:

- information and advice to help you think through your options whether you tell the police or not.
- assessing your needs.
- working with other agencies to make sure that you are safe.
- helping you get external counselling or mental health services if necessary.
- supporting you with sexual health issues and GUM (genitourinary medicine) clinic appointments.
- supporting you with housing concerns.
- giving information about other specialist services such as drug and alcohol agencies.

- making referrals to these agencies with your consent.
- support you at appointments such as with your GP, GUM clinic, police interviews or housing offices.

Reporting to the police

If you do inform the police your ISVA will:

- keep you up-to-date with your case.
- explain legal jargon and processes.
- offer you a pre-court visit.
- explain ways in which the trial could be made easier for you.
- attend court with you.
- support you whatever the outcome.

After the trial your ISVA can guide you in applying for criminal injuries compensation.

Confidentiality

Any information you give will stay confidential to Victim Support unless we feel that you or someone else is at risk of harm, or we are required by law to share it. In such cases we may have to disclose information to appropriate and relevant agencies.