



Freephone **116006**

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Listening. Supporting. Informing.

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Welcome from the Patron

2017 marked my tenth year serving as Patron of the Crime Victims Helpline. My commitment to the organisation has only grown over the years as I have witnessed the excellent work done by staff and volunteers to meet the needs of vulnerable and distressed victims.

I would like to express gratitude to all the volunteers who dedicate time to supporting victims of crime on the helpline. Their care, empathy and professionalism make a huge difference in the lives of our callers. I would like to thank the Department of Justice Victims of Crime Office and the Dormant Accounts Fund for their continued support. And finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the Executive Director, Michele Puckhaber, under whose leadership the Helpline has flourished.

Gillian Hussey
Retired Judge of the District Court
Patron of Crime Victims Helpline

Message from the Chairperson

It is my very great pleasure to be a contributor to the 2017 Crime Victims Helpline Annual Report. While the Annual Report pre-dates my involvement with the Board of Directors of the Crime Victims Helpline, it is a testament to the commitment and hard work of our staff, volunteers and directors to supporting victims of crime throughout Ireland. I am honoured to follow in the footsteps of those who created this great organisation.

Crime exists and is perpetrated every day. People are subject to invasion of their personal space; burglary; threats; intimidation and violence. They are impacted financially and emotionally. Dealing with the aftermath of crime beyond the legal and criminal justice system, is an integral, ongoing and largely unheralded part of the justice spectrum. The Crime Victims Helpline is proud to play a central role in supporting victims of crime and are aware that there remains much more work to be done.

It is no secret that in recent years, the people of Ireland – the generous benefactors of so many of our not-for-profit and charitable organisations – have been shocked and disappointed at the actions of a (small) number of organisations that have taken advantage of Ireland's renowned generosity. Sadly, this behavior has reflected poorly on the vast majority of honest, abiding and under resourced services.

As Crime Victims Helpline is the recipient of government support, we are extremely conscious of our obligation to ensure these funds are used wisely to deliver the maximum benefit to the people of Ireland. It is essential that we operate efficiently, effectively and meet expected standards of transparency, accountability and responsibility. For this reason, the Board of Crime Victims Helpline is committed to good governance. Good, quality governance supports the delivery of a valued, quality service and ensures the investment by government is returned many times over.

In closing, it would be remiss of me to not acknowledge those involved in another successful year of operation by Crime Victims Helpline. First and foremost, I wish to acknowledge the hard work, commitment and passion of our staff, Michele, Marie and Sam. These are the people that keep the service ticking along day in, day out. Without a doubt, our service would not be possible without our compassionate, empathetic and selfless volunteers answering calls. To each and every one of these amazing people, I extend the sincere thanks.

Thank you also to the Victims of Crime Office for the ongoing support, advice and guidance they provide. It is an absolute truth that without the support of the Victims of Crime Office, we would not exist.

I also acknowledge a debt of gratitude to, and thank, our Patron and former Chairperson, Gillian Hussey for her unstinting commitment to and support for victims of crime, as well as her leadership of Crime Victims Helpline over many years.

Finally, I thank the members of the Board of Directors for their passion, determination and unfailing commitment to making the Crime Victims Helpline the best it can be with the means available.

Victims of crime, their family and friends can look forward to many more years of valuable service through Crime Victims Helpline.

Steven R Drew
Chairperson

Message from the Executive Director

Ireland was recently ranked by the website Business Insider as the tenth safest country in the world. This is small comfort to the thousands of people each year who fall victim to crime in Ireland. The Crime Victims Helpline (CVH) is here to listen to and support all victims of crime. We are a safe space to talk, ask questions, and explore options not only for victims, but anyone who has been impacted by crime.

On the 5th November 2017, the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act was signed into law. This act provides victims of crime with comprehensive statutory rights for the first time. This is a huge step forward for victims who have long been marginalised in the criminal justice system. The new rights have also expanded the work of CVH as we endeavour to raise awareness of and to educate victims and the wider criminal justice system about these rights.

2017 was another busy year at CVH. The Helpline experienced a 10% increase in incoming calls in 2017. This came on the heels of a 40% increase in 2016. A new part-time role of Helpline & Social Media Assistant was created to increase capacity and to maintain the quality of the service.

Volunteers continue to play the primary role in providing support on the Helpline. I am so grateful for the caring, generosity and humour of the entire CVH team of volunteers.

The Board of Directors plays a vital role in the overall governance of CVH. We are very lucky to be able to avail of the substantial expertise of our Directors who undertake the role with no remuneration for their time.

2017 was the tenth year of Gillian Hussey's service as Patron of CVH. Since her retirement as judge from the District Court, she has worked as a tireless advocate not only for victims of crime, but for people from all walks of life who have suffered. We are very lucky to have her representing and supporting CVH.

Thank you to everyone—volunteers, staff, Patron, Directors, and community partners—who contributed to CVH in 2017. Thank you as well to the Department of Justice Victims of Crime Office and the Dormant Accounts Fund for their on-going financial support that makes our work possible.

CVH audited financial accounts for 2017 are available on our website at crimevictimshelpline.ie.

Michele Puckhaber
Executive Director

About Crime Victims Helpline

The national Crime Victims Helpline, Freephone 116 006, is a listening and support service for victims of crime in Ireland. Our aim is to support, inform and listen to victims of crime and all those impacted by crime. We provide time and space for people to talk about their experiences and provide information about the criminal justice system and referrals to other resources.

Crimevictimshelpline.ie contains extensive information regarding the impact of crime on victims as well as information about the criminal justice system and other services that assist victims of crime. We are active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (@CrimeVictimLine).

Highlights of 2017

One of the biggest challenges faced by CVH is creating an awareness of the services we provide. Nobody expects to become a victim of crime and it can be difficult for people to know where to find support when they need it. CVH took a number of steps in 2017 to help raise awareness of our services and to build stronger relationships with the Gardaí; victim support organisations; social service providers; and the general public.

People in waiting rooms are a captive (and often bored) audience. With this in mind, CVH arranged to have our leaflets displayed in **GP offices, health centres, and hospitals** across Ireland from April until December.



An awareness raising campaign ran in **cinemas across the country** throughout the year. A short video, highlighting the crimes of burglary and assault, encouraged victims to reach out for support from the Crime Victims Helpline.

CVH created three **animated videos** that help explain the Irish criminal justice system. The videos cover three of the most commonly asked questions by victims of crime:

- **What happens when you report a crime to An Garda Síochána?**
- **How is a decision made whether or not to prosecute?**
- **What happens when a criminal case goes to court?**

The videos use plain English to explain the legal processes which people who report crime to the Gardaí will encounter. They were launched by High Court Judge and Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission Chairperson, Mary Ellen Ring at an event at the Lighthouse Cinema in Dublin. The videos can be viewed on CVH's website and are downloadable from our YouTube channel "Crime Victims Helpline".



CVH exhibited at the **Cork Summer Show** for the first time in 2017. The weather for the outdoor agricultural event was beautiful and over 50,000 people attended. CVH was joined in the booth by a representative from the local victim support organisation, Support After Crime. CVH had the opportunity to inform many people about the services of the Helpline and the supports available to victims of crime in the Cork region.



Another first in 2017 was CVH's participation in the **National Ploughing Championships**. The annual outdoor agricultural event drew nearly 300,00 visitors over its three-day run. Exhibiting in the Health and Wellness arena, volunteers chatted with hundreds of people who were interested in learning more about CVH.



In yet another first in 2017, representatives from CVH participated in the **Dublin Pride Parade**. It is important that victims of all crimes know that CVH is available to them if they need support.

Ireland is one of the few countries in the EU that does not have specific laws to address **hate crime**. CVH met with the Hate and Hostility Research Group, Limerick to discuss this and other matters relating to the support of victims of hate-based crime.

Crime Victims Helpline participated in the organisation of the **Victim Support Europe Conference** that took place in Dublin the 17th and 18th May. Advocates for Victims of Homicide, the Victims' Rights Alliance, Victims Support NI and Victim Support Europe hosted the 2017 Annual Conference; 'Victims of Crime: Rights, Needs & Responses' at the Royal Hospital, Kilmmainham, Dublin. The conference saw over 200 international delegates come together to learn from one another and share best practices. The Conference placed a special focus on victims of terrorism, hate crime, cybercrime and historical abuse.



CVH **conducted trainings** on victim awareness for Senior Gardaí; Restorative Justice Services; Probation Services; and Garda Victim Service Office civilian and member staff. We **developed our own knowledge** by participating in the "International Symposium on Victims of Terrorism" in Dublin; "Supporting at a Distance" Workshop in Mainz and "116 006 Workshop" in Lisbon. We **strengthened our community partnerships** by meeting with Victim Support at Court; One in Four; Federation for Victim Assistance; Care After Prison; Facebook Safety Policy Team; Irish Tourist Assistance Service; Victims Rights Alliance; and Support After Crime.

2017 Statistics

2017 was another busy year for the Crime Victims Helpline. The number of incoming calls increased by 10%. Overall, there were 4,455 contacts with service users over phone, email, text and post.

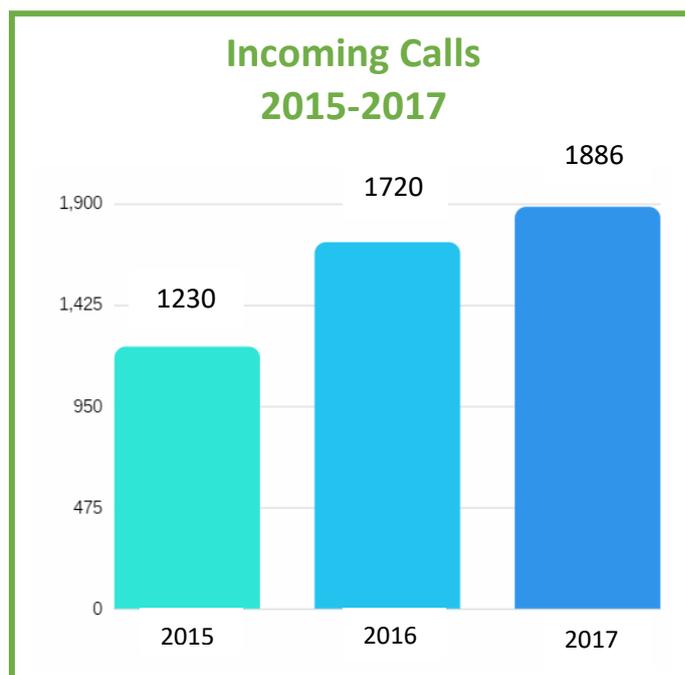
The way in which people contact the Helpline continues to evolve. Over the past few years, there has been a small but steady increase in the number of people seeking support and information over email and text message. In 2016, 88% of contacts were made over the phone. In 2017, the percentage decreased to 78%.

Most of the contacts, 84%, came directly from victims of crime with the remaining coming from friends, family, Gardaí and other service providers such as social workers and counsellors.

42% of service users were male and 58% were female. This continues a trend from 2016 with CVH receiving an increasing percentage of contacts from men. In 2015, only 36% of service users were male.

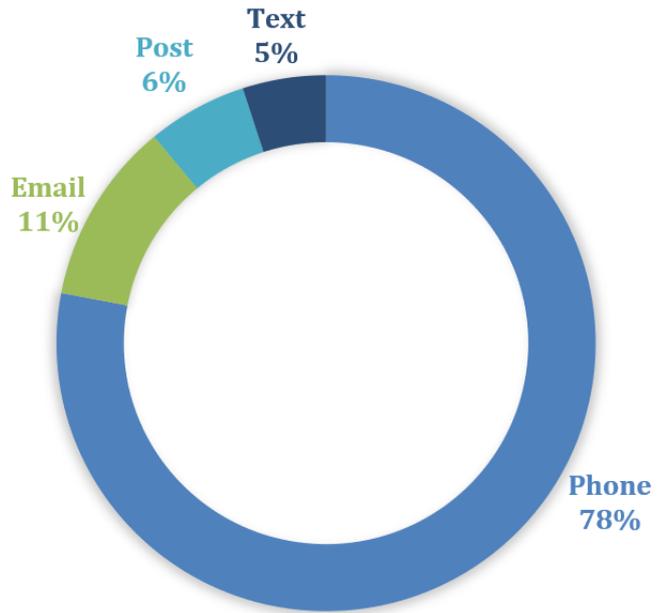
41% of contacts were with people whose primary purpose for contacting CVH was for emotional support, 31% were seeking information about the Criminal Justice System, and 17% were looking for information about and/or referrals to specialised or local support services. One of the services provided by CVH is a follow-up contact to people who would like to hear back from us to see how they are doing. 10% of contacts in 2016 were follow-up calls. The remaining service users were looking for information about compensation; had on-going safety concerns; or wanted guidance on how to help children who were victims or witness to crime. Most interactions with victims touch upon multiple areas and these statistics only capture the primary purpose of the contact as determined by the CVH volunteer or staff member.

Consistent with previous years, in 2017 assault was the most common crime impacting service users followed by harassment and burglary. 2017 saw a large increase in the number of service users who experienced rape, sexual assault and domestic violence. The number of contacts received regarding rape and sexual assault more than doubled from 67 contacts in 2016 to 150 contacts in 2017. The Helpline also experienced a 150% increase in contacts regarding domestic-violence¹ related offences. This corresponded with a large increase in the number of referrals made to Women's Aid; the Rape Crisis Centre; One and Four; and other specialised support services.



¹ Contacts are recorded for statistical purposes according to crime and then it is indicated if the crime was domestic violence related.

How People Are Contacting Us



Location of People Using Our Services

| County | Percentage of CVH Contacts | Percentage of ROI Population |
|-----------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Dublin | 43% | 29% |
| Wicklow | 9% | 3% |
| Cork | 6% | 11.5% |
| Kildare | 6% | 5% |
| Donegal | 4% | 3% |
| Louth | 4% | 3% |
| Wexford | 3% | 3% |
| Meath | 3% | 4% |
| Limerick | 2% | 4% |
| Galway | 2% | 5.5% |
| Waterford | 2% | 2% |
| Sligo | 2% | 1% |
| Cavan | 2% | 2% |
| Tipperary | 2% | 2% |
| Kerry | 1% | 3% |
| Westmeath | 1% | 2% |
| Clare | 1% | 2.5% |
| Mayo | 1% | 3% |
| Roscommon | 1% | 1% |
| Laois | 1% | 2% |
| Kilkenny | 1% | 2% |
| Offaly | 1% | 2% |
| Longford | 1% | 1% |
| Carlow | 1% | 1% |
| Monaghan | <1% | 1% |
| Leitrim | <1% | <1% |

Types of Crime

| Crime | Percentage of Contacts |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Assault | 31% |
| Harassment | 24% |
| Burglary/Aggravated Burglary | 12% |
| Criminal Damage | 6% |
| Rape/Sexual Assault | 6% |
| Theft | 4% |
| Fraud | 3% |
| Child Abuse (Historical) | 3% |
| Anti-social Behaviour | 2% |
| Threats to Kill | 2% |
| Car Theft | 2% |
| Road Traffic Accident | 2% |
| All Other Crimes | 3% |

Board of Directors

Steven Drew, Chairperson (Appointed 2018)

Eileen Brady, Secretary

Tony Hickey

Naoise Kelly

Maeve Ryan

Simon Treanor

Michael Tyndall

Paul Williams

Staff

Michele Puckhaber – Executive Director

Marie Murray – Helpline Support Worker

Sam Burke – Helpline and Social Media Assistant

Crime Victims Helpline is funded by the Department of Justice and Equality Victims of Crime Office and the Dormant Accounts Fund.



Oifig Íospartaigh na Coireachta
Victims of Crime Office



ciste na
gcuntas díomhaoin
the dormant
accounts fund

The Crime Victims Helpline is a registered charity (number 16894)
and a company limited by guarantee (number 409235).
Our registered office is 6-7 Hanover Street East, Dublin 2.