

Victims' Charter Guidance: Overview

Who this is for

The Commissioner's *Charter Guidance* is for staff and agencies with obligations under the [Victims' Charter Act 2006](#) (the *Victims' Charter*) as set out in the [Victims of Crime Commissioner Regulations 2020](#). Prescribed agencies are investigatory agencies, prosecuting agencies and victims' services agencies. Further information about and for agencies is available at the Victims of Crime Commissioners' [website](#).

Purpose of Victims' Charter Guidance

This Charter Guidance is a new initiative of the Victims of Crime Commissioner which aims to provide justice agencies and victims' services organisations with practical ways to provide safe, inclusive and trauma-informed responses to all victims of crime as required under the Victims' Charter. They should be read in conjunction with the comprehensive [Victims' Charter Guidelines](#).

Across 2025, topics will be published including:

1. Treatment of people adversely affected by crime (Principles 6 & 7A)
2. Information, referral and communication (Principles 7 & 7B)
3. Protecting victims' privacy (Principle 14)
4. Complaints handling (Principles 19, 19A & 19B)
5. Investigatory agencies (Principles 8 & 15)
6. Prosecuting agencies (Principles 9, 9A, 9B, 9C, 10, 11 & 15)
7. Courts and prosecuting agencies (Principles 12, 13, 16 & 17)

The nature or characteristics of your organisation may mean that different applications to what is proposed in the Guidance are better suited to your context. For further guidance, please contact the Office of the Victims of Crime Commissioner (VOCC).

The Victims Charter

The Victims' Charter sets out 17 principles that apply to all investigatory, prosecuting and victims' services agencies in Victoria. It defines these types of agencies broadly.

Objects of the Victims' Charter

In summary, the objectives of the Victims' Charter are to recognise:

- ✓ The impact of crime on victims, their families, witnesses (persons adversely affected by crime) and the broader community;
- ✓ That all persons adversely affected by crime should be treated with respect by all relevant agencies, and should be offered appropriate and relevant information to aid recovery;
- ✓ That a victim has an inherent interest in the response by the criminal justice system, and to acknowledge the victim's role as a participant, but not a party, in proceedings for criminal offences; and

Further, that the purpose of the Victims' Charter is to help reduce the likelihood of secondary victimisation by the criminal justice system.

These objectives should be considered by agencies when implementing any policy and activity, and when interacting with victims of crime.

The Victims of Crime Commissioner (VOCC)

The Commissioner is an independent statutory officer with powers to advocate for the respect, recognition, and inclusion of victims of crime in the justice system. The Commissioner is guided by the principles and objectives outlined in the Victims' Charter when making decisions under the [Victims of Crime Commissioner Act 2015](#) (VOCC Act).

How to meet the Victims' Charter

Prescribed agencies must meet the Victims' Charter *principles* relevant to your organisation (see the [Victims' Charter Guidelines](#)). To support you to comply with the Victims' Charter and provide victims with the support and information to which they are entitled, the Charter Guidance explores each thematic area of the Charter principles. Alongside the Charter Guidance, it is suggested that agencies follow a series of steps to note any gaps in compliance and remedying actions:

- ✓ **Step 1: Understand** which Victims' Charter principles apply to your organisation, and the requirements under those principles.
- ✓ **Step 2: Review and improve** your organisation's individual service provisions, policies, procedures, culture, and relevant feedback against the relevant Victims' Charter principles.
- ✓ **Step 3: Measure success** with relevant indicators and evidence of your work to report in the VOCC's Annual Compliance Survey.

How compliance to the Charter Principles is monitored

The VOCC Act requires the Commissioner to report annually on prescribed agency compliance with the Victims' Charter. This report is laid in the Victorian Parliament.

Each year, prescribed agencies will be provided with a **survey** to complete which requests specific information about compliance with the Victims' Charter. Agency responses inform understanding of levels of agency awareness of the Victims' Charter and the ways in which they enact their obligations.

The VOCC approach to non-compliance is graduated, and in most cases, will encourage compliance through guidance and support, with more significant sanctions being used for prescribed agencies that are uncooperative or that have repeated or serious failings in compliance, or where risk of harm to victims of crime has been identified. For further information, see the [VOCC's Regulatory Approach](#).

Further Information:

Office of the Victims of Crime Commissioner's Regulatory Strategy Team

Email: chartercompliance@vocc.vic.gov.au

Links

- VOCC website: <https://victimsofcrimecommissioner.vic.gov.au>
- Victims' Charter Act 2006: <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/victims-charter-act-2006/022>
- Victims of Crime Commissioner Regulations 2020: <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/victims-crime-commissioner-regulations-2020/002>
- Victims' Charter Guidelines: <https://victimsofcrimecommissioner.vic.gov.au/media/buzlqioh/vocc-victims-charter-guidelines.pdf>
- Victims of Crime Commissioner Act: <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/victims-crime-commissioner-act-2015/003>
- VOCC Regulatory Approach: <https://victimsofcrimecommissioner.vic.gov.au/media/znylihl/vocc-regulatory-approach-may-2024.pdf>