

How to access Victims Support payments if you experience domestic violence

If you have suffered physical or psychological harm, damage or loss of property because of violence, you may be eligible to claim for Victims Services support.

Domestic violence, sexual assault and attempted sexual assault are all acts of violence for which victim's support is available.

Depending on your circumstance, Victim Support may include:

Counselling - to assist with your recovery.

Financial Assistance for Immediate Needs

– money to meet your urgent needs. For example:

- money to help you relocate to a safer place
- money to improve the safety and security of your home (e.g. changing locks).

Financial Assistance for Economic Loss –

money to aid your recovery. For example, to pay for:

- loss of earnings or wages
- medical and dental treatment
- expenses related to loss or damage to your personal effects (e.g. smashed mobile phone).

Recognition Payment – a one-off payment to acknowledge your injuries and impact of the violence.

Where to get support:

NSW Victims Services can provide information and application forms.

Phone: 1800 633 063

Email: vs@dcj.nsw.gov.au

Justice Support Centre can assist you with any questions or concerns, with free legal advice over the phone:

Phone: (02) 9601 7777

Email: info@swwslc.org.au

When to call: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11-30-1.30pm

Disclaimer: This factsheet gives general information only. It is not legal advice. If you have a legal problem, always get advice from a lawyer. This information only applies in New South Wales. Information accurate as of June 2022.

Please read the Victims Services guide on the reverse side for a summary of what support is available and time limits for when you can claim.

How might these new laws affect my clients?

- 1.** It is hoped that these reforms will create long-term cultural change and empower victim-survivors to report sexual violence. Procedures for reporting sexual violence to the Police or via [SARO](#) (Sexual Assault Reporting Option) remain unchanged.
- 2.** If your client makes a disclosure of historical sexual violence (predating 1 June 2022), you should let them know the old law still applies to their situation. If the matter goes to a criminal trial, the accused will be charged under the old law, but the jury will be provided with the new jury directions.
- 3.** If you are supporting a victim-survivor through a criminal trial, you might like to let them know about the changes in jury directions.
- 4.** The new laws also make “stealthing” (non-consensual condom removal) a crime. Before the reforms, the law on this was unclear. If your client chooses, they can make a police complaint about this.
- 5.** Your client may be eligible to make an application to the [Victims Support Scheme](#) for sexual assault by stealthing, which was not previously captured by the Scheme.
- 6.** Even though the laws place an obligation on the accused to take steps to establish consent, the burden of proof remains the same in criminal trials. This means the prosecution must still prove the offence beyond reasonable doubt.
- 7.** The reforms are intended to improve victim experience of the justice system after advocates highlighted criminal trials for sexual offences were extremely invasive and traumatic for victim-survivors. However, the full effects of the reforms are yet to be seen.