

Guide Nine – Claiming Compensation for a sexual assault

As a victim of sexual assault, you may be able to claim compensation. Compensation is a way of recognising that you have been a victim of a violent crime, but will never fully compensate you for what you have suffered.

If the perpetrator pleads guilty or is found guilty, the court may order them to pay you compensation for any loss, damage or injury caused as a result of the crime.

You might also consider making a claim for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. To make a claim, you'll need to provide information about yourself and the crime to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA).

You'll need to fill out an application form online or by phone. You'll be asked to provide some basic information about yourself and the assault, including any injuries you sustained. The CICA may also ask you to provide evidence of your injuries, either from your GP or another medical professional or, in the case of a disabling mental injury, evidence from a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist if you have this.

The CICA will also contact the police for further information about the assault and to confirm that you cooperated with them as far as you were able to in order to find the person who assaulted you and bring them to justice. There are also eligibility requirements, like your nationality, where the crime was committed, and any unspent convictions you might have. In some cases, the CICA might ask for additional medical evidence. If there is a cost attached to this and you can show you can't afford this, the CICA may pay for it. This will then be deducted from any compensation payment you later receive, up to an amount of £50. You might also be asked to attend a psychological assessment if you're claiming for mental injuries and don't already have medical evidence of this. If this is required, the CICA will send you a consent form and an appointment will be made for you to attend an assessment.

You should apply as soon as possible after the incident and within two years, though different rules apply if you were under the age of 18 when the assault occurred. The time limits can only be extended where there are exceptional circumstances for any delay. Applying for compensation won't influence any trials you are involved in, so you shouldn't wait for the outcome or for a prosecution or conviction against the perpetrator before you apply.

You should not delay making an application if the person who assaulted you is already on or awaiting trial. The CICA may put your application on hold until you know the outcome of the trial, but may be able to progress your claim if they already have sufficient information.

You can find out more about making a claim at <https://www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-criminal-injury>. You can also contact CICA by phone on 0300 003 3601.

You can get compensation for:

- physical injuries
- disabling mental injuries, where your day-to-day performance at work or school, or your relationships are significantly affected
- sexual or physical abuse

- loss of earnings and special expenses

You don't need a solicitor to make a claim for compensation. Free independent advice may be available from local support or other charitable organisations. You can check what is available in your local area by asking the police or through a support service. Take a look at *Guide Two* for more information on local support services.

A friend or relative can make the application on your behalf if you're finding it hard to do it yourself. You'll need to tell the CICA that you want that person to deal with your claim.