HOMICIDE
A GUIDE FOR BEREAVED FAMILIES

Advice, Entitlements and Services
AdVIC
AdVIC is a Registered Charity (CHY 16399) which assists and supports families bereaved by homicide. Our organisation is run by families who have been bereaved by homicide, so we understand many of the issues you face following the devastating loss of someone you love, or someone who is close to you.

The information available on this booklet is intended as a guide only. It does not purport to be, nor should it be relied upon as, advice.
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Extract from an address by Mrs Mary Robinson to the 2009 AdVIC Memorial Service

Thank you for inviting me to this special occasion and for the opportunity to briefly address you. Dealing with the death of a loved one is always difficult and a sudden death, as most people know, can affect people emotionally, physically and practically. But I am fortunate in that I can only imagine that losing a loved one to any form of homicide must be a shattering experience. I have never had that first-hand experience but you each have had it and it is to your credit that you have reached out in such a meaningful way to support each other by sharing your experiences.

I commend all of you here today and all in AdVIC. What is particularly significant and commendable is that in your painful experience of loss you are striving to ensure that conditions will be as constructively supportive as possible for those who face a similar trauma in future. With your work you hope to ensure that a comprehensive and co-ordinated inter-agency support will be available to families who are victims of the loss of a loved one to homicide in the future. No one has the insights, the lived experience of coping which you have, so it is deeply impressive that you are prepared to share with others who will face similar tragic loss in the future. I wish you well in your endeavours.
Why you received this booklet

Information, advice and contacts

The aftermath of a homicide is a time of immense trauma, confusion and activity. Apart from dealing with the unbearable pain of loss and the arrangements for a funeral, so many other unexpected pressures come flooding into your life. You may suddenly find yourself immersed in the unfamiliar and often difficult world of the criminal justice system, the Gardaí, the investigation and court dates.

While families are at the centre of all this, many describe their experience as being on the outside. They feel excluded, often they are not kept informed, but are expected to understand and participate when called upon. It is a very daunting task to seek out and grasp the vital information you need to help you cope and to understand what’s going on.

In this intense environment, many families are not well informed about their rights. Many of us do not understand how to negotiate the complicated layers of the criminal justice system. That is why we set up AdVIC, and why we produced this information booklet. In these pages you will find most of the important information, advice and contacts you will need. In it we;

- Explain who we are and what we do.
- Inform you of your rights and entitlements.
- Talk about the challenges people face in the aftermath of homicide.
- Summarise the role of each agency in the criminal justice system.
- Provide contact information for each of these agencies.
• Detail the services AdVIC offers.
• Outline the voluntary support services available.
• Give advice on dealing with the media.
AdVIC - who we are & what we do

Founded in 2005 by a group of families who were trying to cope with the unlawful violent killing of a family member, AdVIC is a national, non-profit, registered charity (CHY16399) partly government-funded organisation run by, and on behalf of, families bereaved by homicide.

We are a totally independent organisation - Advocates (Ad) who campaign for greater rights for Victims (VIC) of homicide, their families and friends. We bring together families bereaved by homicide including those affected by murder, manslaughter and fatal assault. (The word ‘homicide’ is a legal term that describes murder, manslaughter or any unlawful killing).

We were formed to ensure that the rights of families of homicide victims are not ignored within the criminal justice system and to bring about a fairer, more balanced system for such families. We also work to achieve improved coordination between the agencies that make up that system.

We are not affiliated with any religious or political organisation, and hold no ideology beyond the right of victims and survivors to be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Following a homicide, bereaved families may feel isolated and misunderstood. AdVIC aims to offer help and support to anyone who has been affected by homicide by providing the following facilities and services.
Facing extra challenges after homicide

Nothing can minimise the trauma you go through following a homicide, but our aim is to try to help alleviate at least some of the other difficulties you may encounter by providing clear and straightforward information about the criminal justice system.

In fact, there is a lot of information available. However it is not always easy to access. Sometimes, when you do find it, much of it is worded in dense legal language that can be very daunting especially during a time of great trauma and upset. That is why we have assembled some of the most important information here, and why we have tried to explain it in clear and straightforward language.

Because of our individual and collective experience of bereavement through homicide, we have often experienced breakdown in communication between the various agencies that make up the criminal justice system. This can add greatly to the upset and frustration you feel. We believe that understanding the system and the protagonists within it, is a first step to relieving the stress and upset where you can begin to appreciate your rights and entitlements.
Your rights and entitlements

The first Victims Charter was produced in 1999 when the State gave “its full commitment to giving victims of crime a central place in the criminal justice system.”

It was revisited in 2010 in order to set out the rights and entitlements to the services given by the various state agencies in the criminal justice system to victims of crime.

The Charter is available from the Victims of Crime Office, from AdVIC and all voluntary organisations working with victims of crime.

We now summarise what services you can expect following a homicide.

THE VICTIMS’ CHARTER

We believe your rights are far too limited under this Charter, but it is still important that you are fully aware of them and employ them. They are:

- The Gardaí should inform you about the services of support agencies.
- The Gardaí should appoint a named member of the investigation team to liaise with you: this person is known as a Family Liaison Officer (FLO).
- The Gardaí should explain and keep you informed of all aspects of the criminal investigation, including when a suspect is charged.
- The Gardaí should tell you about the inquest date, time and place (This is not on the Gardaí Victim’s Charter, but on the Coroner’s Victim’s Charter).
- Following the inquest, post-mortem reports can be requested from the coroner’s office for a designated fee.
- When a suspect is due to appear in court, the Garda should tell you the time, date and location of the court hearings, whether the suspect is in custody or on bail, and the prosecution process.
- The Gardaí should tell you about voluntary organisations that can support you during the court case.
- The Gardaí should tell you about the Victim Impact Statement mechanism.
- When the DPP’s office decides not to prosecute, you can make your views known in writing to this office for their consideration.
- Where a homicide took place on or after 22 October 2008, you can write to the office of the DPP to ask their reasons for failing to prosecute.
- You should request a pre-trial meeting with the Prosecution Solicitor and the barrister dealing with your case. It is best for this pre-trial meeting to take place at least two weeks in advance of a trial.
- Following the trial, if you think a sentence is unduly lenient, you can contact the office of the DPP to ask if they will request the Court of Criminal Appeal to review the sentence.
- The Courts Service should provide you with a victim waiting room reserved seating in murder/manslaughter cases; details of voluntary organisations that offer support to families in courts and by prior arrangement the possibility of visiting to the courthouse before the trial.
- You can write to the Victim Liaison Officer of the Prison Service to be kept informed of significant developments in the management of the prisoner’s sentence (including release).
- You can apply for financial compensation to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal (see page 20).
- You can send a submission to the Parole Board (see page 25) for role of the Parole Board) which will be added to the file of the offender when his or her parole is being considered.

**NB: It is important to note that any submission you make will be made available to the offender.**
Key roles and public services

When homicide takes the life of a loved one or friend, it inevitably means contact with the criminal justice system and other agencies. There are many key organisations and agencies within this system and your circumstances might mean that you have to engage with a number of these agencies for the first time in your life. This experience can be positive, but often it is confusing, frustrating and sometimes traumatic. You have rights and entitlements and it is important to know and understand the system in order to get the best out of it. Here we list and summarise the role of some of the major organisations and services in the system:

AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

The first contact you might have with the criminal justice system could be when members of An Garda Síochána have to give you the tragic news about the homicide. In 2006, An Garda Síochána introduced specific homicide training and created a Family Liaison Officer (FLO) service.

FLOs are appointed to keep victims’ families informed of the progress of the investigation, and to ensure that they are afforded appropriate and relevant information and practical support. There are currently 350 specially trained FLOs in An Garda Síochána.

In October 2006, they also introduced a Garda Charter for Victims of Crime (this can be downloaded from www.garda.ie).

According to this charter, the Gardaí should:

- Tell you the name, telephone number and station of the investigating
• Garda and the PULSE incident number - this is a number given to your incident so that the Garda can quickly find the details of your case.

• Outline the procedure to you and ensure that you are kept informed of the progress, including whether a suspect is charged or cautioned.

• Tell you about the services available for victims of crime, including the help available through the Crime Victims’ Helpline.

• Tell you when a suspect is charged and should inform you of the following:

  - Whether the accused is in custody or on bail and the conditions attached to the bail, such as staying away from you or your house.
  - The time, date and location of the court hearing of the charges against the accused.
  - The prosecution process involved and if you are likely to be called as a witness, and the support you can get from voluntary organisations whom support victims of crime during the court hearing.
  - The circumstances where a Judge will ask you for a Victim Impact Statement and arrange for its completion.
  - Your entitlement to court expenses.
  - The final outcome of the criminal trial.

Following a homicide, the Gardaí will contact you in writing outlining the name of the investigating Garda station contact details and the Garda Pulse Incident Number. This number is to be used in all your communication with the Gardaí and can be used at any Garda station to get an update on the investigation. You will also
receive with this letter, contact details for all the victim help agencies available within Ireland.

Your local Garda Superintendent will keep contact directly with you and any organisation you have asked to help you. A named Garda Family Liaison Officer (FLO) from the investigation team will keep up contact between you, the investigating Garda and any relevant support organisation you have chosen.

When a suspect has been charged with the homicide, you will receive a second letter outlining this development in the investigation and giving you once more the details contained in the first letter. If for any reason you are not fully satisfied, or have any enquiries on any aspect of your treatment by members of An Gardaí Síochána, you may contact:

Your local Garda Superintendent.

Details are available at www.garda.ie or in the telephone directory (green pages) under An Garda Síochána

Or

The Garda Victim Liaison Office, Garda Síochána, Community Relations and Community Policy Section, Harcourt Square, Dublin 2.
Telephone: (01) 666 3880 or (01) 666 3822 or (01) 666 3882
Fax: (01) 666 3801. Email: crimevictims@garda.ie

You may also refer a complaint to the:

Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission, 150 Upper Abbey Street, Dublin1.
LoCall: 1890 600 800 or Tel: (01) 871 6727 Fax: (01) 814 7023
Email: info@gsoc.ie Website: www.gardaombudsman.ie
CORONER’S SERVICE

A coroner is someone who investigates the cause of a sudden, unexplained or violent death and will need to do a post-mortem examination of the body of your loved one. Coroners will do their best to release the body of the deceased for burial without any unnecessary delay. They will tell you the likely date and time of the release of the body.

An Inquest must be held, by law, whenever a person’s death is due to unnatural causes. An Inquest is a public inquiry carried out by the Coroner. An Garda Síochána will usually tell you as soon as possible of the date, time and place of the Inquest. A coroner has sole power to decide which witnesses should attend the Inquest. Any person who has a proper interest in the inquiry (and the family of the deceased would be the most obvious) may personally examine a witness, or employ a solicitor to represent them (at the family’s own cost). At the Inquest, coroners will try to be as sensitive as possible. For example, you may choose to leave the courtroom when the pathologist (a specialist doctor who reports on the examination of the body at the post-mortem) gives evidence.

As the victim’s family, you can also request to speak to the State Pathologist, prior to or during the Inquest. It is imperative that you write to the Coroner’s Office to let them know if you want to attend the Inquest. This is to ensure that the family is correctly informed of the time and date of the Inquest. An Inquest may be opened prior to the criminal trial, but will be adjourned until completion of the trial, as the coroner will not be in a position to return a verdict at this point. Following the criminal trial, the Inquest will be concluded. You should contact the coroner’s office again, after the trial, to ensure you are correctly informed of the time and date of the conclusion of the Inquest.
Following the Inquest, you can ask for a copy of the post-mortem report from the coroner’s office for a set fee.

An interim Death Certificate can be issued once the Inquest has been adjourned, but a final Death Certificate will not be issued until the Inquest has been concluded.

You can get the names and addresses and telephone numbers of coroners from www.coroners.ie

The Dublin Coroner’s contacts are:

Dublin City Coroner’s Court, Store Street, Dublin 1.
Tel: (01) 874 6684 or (01) 874 3006. Fax (01) 874 2840
Email: coroners@dublincity.ie.
Website: www.coronerdublincity.ie

If for any reason you are not fully satisfied, or have any enquiries on any aspect of the service of the coroner you can contact:

Coroner Service Implementation Team, Athlument House,
IDA Business Park, Johnstown, Navan, Co Meath.
Tel: (046) 909 1323. Fax: (046) 905 0560
Email: csitmail@justice.ie
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS (DPP)

The Constitution of Ireland provides that crimes and offences are to be prosecuted in the name of The People. The Prosecution of Offences Act, 1974, established the office of Director of Public Prosecutions as an independent office. On behalf of the State, it is the responsibility of the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to initiate legal proceedings (initiate a prosecution) following the homicide.

When the Gardaí complete their investigation, they send a file to the DPP. The prosecutor must read the file carefully and decide whether there is enough evidence to put before the court. As the family of a homicide victim, you can ask the DPP to take your views into account when they are deciding to prosecute. You can also ask the DPP to look again at a decision the office has made with which you do not agree. When the decision is taken to prosecute, and the Gardaí have charged the accused, the prosecution will write down the evidence against the accused. The document that contains the evidence is called the Book of Evidence.

When the prosecution has gathered all the evidence they need for the trial, the Gardaí will give the Book of Evidence to the accused. Once this happens, the District Court judge will set a date for the trial. The prosecution solicitor will work with the Gardaí to make sure you are kept up to date on what is happening in the case.

Most families have great concerns regarding what to expect during the trial, therefore, a pre-trial meeting with the prosecution team is of enormous benefit to you and your family. A pre-trial meeting allows the prosecution solicitor and the barrister to explain to you
what happens in court. However, strict rules prevent them from talking to you about the evidence of the case.

We recommend that the pre-trial meeting takes place a few weeks before the trial **and never on the morning of the start of the trial, as you will not fully benefit from such a meeting at that time.**

To avail of this service (strongly recommended), you should in the first instance inform the Senior Investigating Officer dealing with the case.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this you can request the meeting directly from the prosecution solicitor by contacting the Office of the DPP directly by phone or write to:

Office of the DPP, Chief Prosecution Solicitor,  
90 North King Street, Smithfield, Dublin 7  
Tel: (01) 858 8500. Fax: (01) 858 8555

Cases heard in Dublin are dealt with by the Chief Prosecution Solicitor. In the case of manslaughter being prosecuted outside of Dublin you will need to contact the local State Solicitor. A full list with contact details is available on www.dppireland.ie under contact us/local state solicitors or by ringing (01) 858 8500.

If a member of your family is the victim in a fatal case on or after the 22 October 2008, you can write to ask the DPP to give you the reason why the office of the DPP decided not to prosecute the case. Following the sentencing of the accused, if you think the sentence is too lenient, you may make your views known to the DPP’s
office, who may ask the Court of Criminal Appeal to review the sentence if they think it is unduly lenient.

If you have questions or complaints about the service, you may contact the:

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions,
Infirmary Road, Dublin 7, Ireland.
Tel: (01) 858 8500

COURTS SERVICE
The Courts Service was set up in November 1999 to manage the courts. They must, by law, take account of the needs of court users, including witnesses and victims of crime.

The Courts Service will aim to look after your needs by providing the following facilities and services:

- victim waiting rooms in almost all refurbished courthouses.
- dedicated victim suite of four rooms and reception area within the Criminal Courts of Justice (“CCJ”) in Dublin.
- reserved seating for you and your family at the Central and Circuit Criminal Court hearings (by prior arrangement).
- visits to the courthouse before the trial, by prior arrangement and, if required.
- customer liaison officers within each of their offices – these officers are the first point of contact if you have an inquiry. Customer liaison officers can arrange access to victim rooms (where available), reserve family seating in murder and manslaughter cases and can organise advance visits to
courthouses. They can also give you contact details of voluntary organisations that offer support to crime victims.

More information can be found on their website www.courts.ie or in the publication entitled *Going to Court* – which is available as a booklet, on DVD or on their website.

If you have questions or complaints about the service you can contact:

Tel: (01) 888 6000. Fax: (01) 888 6090
Website: www.courts.ie

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY
The Department of Justice and Equality is structured around groups of Divisions, each headed up by a member of the Management Advisory Committee (MAC), who are responsible for administration and policy in relation to:

- An Garda Síochána
- Immigration related services
- Civil law reform
- Court policy
- Crime, security and Northern Ireland, and criminal law reform
- Equality
- EU/International Matters
- Human Resources, Corporate Services, Organisational Development, Finance, Internal Audit and IT
- Migrant integration
• Mutual assistance extradition
• Prison and Probation Policy
• Reception and Integration Agency (RIA)

Detailed information on the Department of Justice can be found on:
www.justice.ie

Communication with the Department of Justice and the Minister for Justice should be sent to:

Department of Justice and Equality,
94 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 602 8202. Fax: (01) 661 5461. Lo-call: 1890 221 227
Email: info@justice.ie

The following might be relevant to you and your family:

VICTIMS OF CRIME OFFICE
The core mandate of the Victims of Crime Office is to improve the continuity and quality of services to victims of crime by State agencies and non-governmental organisations throughout the country. It works to support the development of competent, caring and efficient services to victims of crime. Among its key activities are:

• Using the Victims Charter to achieve improved standards of treatment of victims by relevant State and voluntary sector organisations.
• Promoting awareness concerning victims’ needs and services available to victims of crime.
• Advising the Minister for Justice and Equality on victims’ issues in Ireland and on international developments pertinent to victims.

• Working in co-operation with Cosc, the Anti-Human-Trafficking Unit, the Criminal Law Reform Division and other relevant sections of The Department of Justice and Equality to ensure a co-ordinated policy response to issues in relation to victims of crime by the Department.

The Director of the Victims of Crime Office is a member of the Independent Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime; the office provides the secretariat to the Commission. The Commission funds voluntary sector organisations to provide support to victims of crime. Contact details:

Victims of Crime Office, Department of Justice and Equality, 51 St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin 2 Tel: (01) 602 8661. Fax: (01) 602 8634 Email: voc@justice.ie . Website: www.victimsofcrimeoffice.ie

**CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION TRIBUNAL**

Following a homicide, the family of the victim is entitled to claim compensation. This is handled by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal (C.I.C.T).

The first step is to request a Fatal Application Form from C.I.C.T. This should be done as early as possible following a homicide as it may take a considerable time before any claim is completed. You will be compensated for funeral expenses, as well as loss of potential earning for dependants of the victim. You will be asked to submit receipts and proof of earnings with your application.
If you have difficulty with any aspect of the application form, the staff of the tribunal will assist you or you can also get help from a range of victim support groups including AdVIC.

Remember, if you enlist the help of a solicitor to do this it will be at your own expense, as the Tribunal will not cover your legal expenses.

Application forms should be requested from:

Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal,
Second Floor, 7-11 Montague Court, Montague Street, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 476 8670 or (01) 476 8616
Email: criminalinjuries@justice.ie

Or you can download the application form at the following website address:

www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Criminal_Injuries_Compensation_Scheme

THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION
This Department is responsible for the following resources and services that may be of help to you following the homicide:

- **Financial Assistance Following a Bereavement.** Once-off payments may be available to help families following the difficult time in the aftermath of a homicide. Contact Social Welfare Office for eligibility.
- **Applying for a Bereavement Grant.** The Bereavement Grant is a once-off payment made in respect of deaths. Eligibility for
this grant is based on PRSI contributions. The BG1 form can be obtained from your local Social Welfare Office or can be downloaded at:


In addition, you may be able to apply for some other social welfare payments, for example; the Widowed or Surviving Civil Partner Grant for widows/widowers/surviving civil partners with dependent children.

- **Applying for a Death Certificate.** In due course, to obtain a Death Certificate, you must complete an Application for Death Certificate form. This form can be obtained at your local health board office or downloaded from:

  www.groireland.ie/docs/Application%20for%20Death%20Certificate%20revised.pdf

Send completed form to:

Civil Registration Office, Office of the Register General,
Government Offices, Convent Road, Roscommon,
Co. Roscommon.
Tel: (090) 663 2900 or LoCall: 1890 252 076.
Fax: (090) 663 2999

However, as it may take some time for even an Interim Death Certificate to be available, you will be able to deal with the Department of Social Protection by providing a copy of the newspaper notice of the death.
CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD

The Citizens Information Board is a national agency responsible for supporting the provision of information on social services through three channels: online, telephone and face-to-face. The Citizens Information website: www.citizensinformationboard.ie provides information on public services for the general public and information providers.

The national Citizens Information phone service (076) 1074000 answers queries by telephone or through a variety of other channels, including email or SMS.

Citizen Information Services provide a face-to-face service to the public through a network of Citizens Information Centres. Citizens Information is provided by 42 Citizens Information Services from 268 locations. Citizens Information Services provide free, impartial and confidential information.

To find a location near you, please check on:
www.citizensinformationboard.ie/services/citizens/citizens_centres.html

A free booklet ‘Information For Those Affected By Bereavement’ produced by the Citizens Information Services provides useful information on dealing with the practical and material matters that arise following a death.

It is available from your nearest Citizens Information Centre or online at:

PRISON SERVICE

As the victim’s family, you are entitled to be informed by the Prison Service of any significant development in the management of the perpetrator’s sentence as well as any impending release. **In order to avail of this service you must first register with the Victims Liaison Officer (VLO) of the prison services.** The VLO will enter into direct contact with you by phone, text, email or letter.

The VLO will tell you:

- Where a prisoner is imprisoned
- Inter-prison transfers
- Parole Board hearings (for prisoners sentenced to eight years or more)
- Decisions from Parole Board process
- Temporary releases
- Expected release dates
- General information

To register with this service, you must fill in an application form, which can be obtained from the Irish Prison Service at the address below or on www.irishprison.ie

Victim Liaison Officer, Irish Prison Service Headquarters, IDA Business Park, Ballinalee Road, Longford.
Tel: (043) 333 5100 or (043) 333 5193. Fax: 043 3335107
Email: vlo@irishprisons.ie
THE PAROLE BOARD

The Parole Board’s principal function is to advise the Minister for Justice and Equality in relation to the administration of long-term prison sentences.

The Parole Board reviews the cases of prisoners sentenced to 8 years or more (but less than 14 years) at half sentence stage. Prisoners sentenced to fourteen years or more, (including life) are reviewed after 7 years have been served.

The Board, by way of recommendation to the Minister, advises of the prisoner’s progress to date, the degree to which the prisoner has engaged with the various therapeutic services and how best to proceed with the future administration of the sentence.

The final decision regarding the recommendations of the Parole Board lies with the Minister, who can accept them in their entirety, in part, or reject them.

You can inform the Irish Prison Services Victim Liaison Officer or write directly to the Parole Board if you wish to be informed of dates of parole hearings, or if you wish to document to the Board the effect the homicide has had on you and your family. The Board will always consider the view of the family of a homicide victim. However, it is up to you to make the contact.

It is important to note that this is the only time and way for a family to add their view to the prisoner’s file (to be used at time of deciding on Parole). **However, you should know that the prisoner may be made aware of your views.**
Submissions are sent to:

Parole Board, 2nd Floor, 6/7 Hanover Street, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 474 8767. Fax: (01) 474 8713
Email: info@paroleboard.gov.ie
Dealing with the media

In the aftermath of a homicide, a family or individual can suddenly be thrust into the media limelight. This can be very distressing for families. Demands from the media for comment or interviews can be intrusive and can cause extra stress. However, some people who have been bereaved by homicide may want to utilise the media to help further the investigation or to obtain justice. In these cases, if you are inexperienced in dealing with the media, it is wise to get the support and advice of someone who is used to dealing with the world of press, radio and TV, or look to your legal representative to help you handle this. Do not approach the media unprepared.

Remember, reports of the death of a loved one by homicide will most probably be reported on TV, radio and in most newspapers. Often, reports are inaccurate or even sensationalised, and this can cause increased distress at a time when you are already much traumatised.

The National Union of Journalists has a Code of Conduct that all members must adhere to. This code states that ‘journalists shall obtain information, photographs and illustrations only by straightforward means’ and ‘a journalist shall do nothing which entails intrusion into anybody's private life, grief or distress, subject to justification by overriding considerations of the public interest’.

If you feel that either of these codes has been breached:

- You must first make your complaint to the Editor of the newspaper or magazine in question, explaining why you think the code has been breached.
• If you do not get a response within a reasonable amount of time (about two weeks) or if you are not happy with the response, you can make a complaint to the Press Ombudsman.
• The Office of the Press Ombudsman provides an independent forum for resolving complaints by the public against the press, quickly and free of charge.
• You can make a complaint to the Press Ombudsman about any article you read in any Irish newspaper (including Irish editions of UK newspapers) or Irish magazine that you feel breaches the code. This applies to national, provincial and regional newspapers.
• You can also make a complaint about the behaviour of a journalist which you feel breaches the code.
• You must be directly affected by and involved in the article or behaviour.
• You must lodge your complaint with the Press Ombudsman within three months of the date of publication of the article or occurrence of the incident.

If the decision is in your favour, the newspaper or magazine is required to publish the decision. You can appeal a decision to the Press Council of Ireland.

Office of the Press Ombudsman,

1, 2 & 3 Westmoreland Street, Dublin 2.
Tel: Lo-call 1890 208 080.
Fax: (01) 6740046
Email: info@pressombudsman.ie  Website: www.pressombudsman.ie
Homicides abroad

When the homicide of an Irish citizen takes place abroad, if the Diplomatic or Consular mission is informed of the homicide of your loved one, arrangements will be made with the Garda Síochána to have you in Ireland informed immediately. You may have been informed of the homicide by someone else and will need to inform the Department of Foreign Affairs.

You will need to contact the ‘Consular Services’ section. It can be accessed as follows:

**In Ireland**
Consular Section, Department of Foreign Affairs,
80 St Stephen’s Green, Dublin 2.
Tel: Assistance Abroad: (01) 408 2308 or (01) 408 2056
or (01) 408 2833

**Abroad**
You will need to contact the Irish Embassy (Irish Diplomatic or Consular Mission) in the country concerned. This information can be obtained by ringing the Department of Foreign Affairs, Consular Section, at the numbers above or by consulting the full list on: www.dfa.ie/embassies/.

Consular officials will assist you with the logistical issues that arise following the homicide.

It may also be necessary for the Irish Diplomatic or Consular Mission to remain in contact with you for some years as police or judicial investigations progress. In that case, you will be kept informed of all new information as it is made known to the Mission.
by the relevant authorities of the country concerned. You will also be informed when changes of personnel at the Mission require that a new officer will take over handling of the case.
Bereavement and Counselling Services

When family, friends and those closest to you are unable or unavailable to help with the enormity of the aftermath of a homicide, bereavement counselling may be very beneficial. The following services are all involved in counselling and can provide you with the details of the counselling service nearest to you.

1. **Irish Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy**
   21 Dublin Road, Bray, County Wicklow
   Tel: 00 353 1 2723427 or 00 353 1 2869933
   Email: iacp@iacp.ie. Website: www.irish-counselling.ie

2. **Bereavement Counselling Services**
   The Community Hall, Main Street, Baldoyle, Dublin 13
   St. Patrick's Nursing Home, Dublin Street, Baldoyle, Dublin 13.
   Tel. (01) 839 1766 Mon to Fri. 9.00 a.m.to 1.00p.m.
   E-mail: bereavement@eircom.net
   Web site: www.bereavementireland.com

3. **Barnardos**
   **Bereavement Counselling for Children**
   Is a service for children and young people who have lost someone close to them, (for example, a parent or a sibling).
   Helpline Tel: (01) 473 2110 Mon to Fri 10am to 12 pm
   **Dublin Barnardos**, Hyde Square, 654 South Circular Road, Dublin 8.
   Tel: (01) 453 0355.
   Email: bereavement@barnardos.ie
   **Cork Barnardos**, The Bowling Green, White Street, Cork
   Tel: (021) 4310591.Email:bereavement@cork.barnardos.ie
4. **Family Resource Centres**
Over 107 Family Resource Centres are located nationwide. Many provide counselling services. Visit their website where you will be able to locate the service nearest you using the map centres tool on www.fsa.ie

5. **Volunteer Victim Support Organisations**
The following organisations in addition to AdVIC are funded by the State to support victims of crime. After a homicide the following groups may be very helpful to family and friends of homicide victims:

1. *For information, emotional support and referral to other services:*
   **Crime Victims Helpline:** Free Phone: 116 006.
   Text on 085 1 33 77 11
   Website: www.crimevictimshelpline.ie
   Email: info@crimevictimshelpline.ie

2. *For emotional support and practical information, provided one to one by trained volunteers*
   **SAH (Support after Homicide)**
   Tel: (087) 983 7322.
   Email: denispmchugh@hotmail.com
   Website: www.supportafterhomicide.ie

3. *For emotional and practical support during the trial from trained volunteers*
   **Victim Support at Court,**
   **Áras Uí Dhálaigh, Four Courts, Dublin 7**
   Tel: Office (01) 872 6785 or Mobile: (087) 288 5521
   Email: info@vsac.ie . Website: vsac.ie
AdVIC - what we offer

- Clear and practical information on all of the agencies within the criminal justice system, including information on your rights by the distribution of the AdVIC information booklet via An Garda Síochána to all families following a homicide.
- Assistance to families and friends of homicide victims via the AdVIC helpline and the website www.advic.ie.
- Subsidised counselling for families and friends of homicide victims and homicide bereavement support groups in Dublin and Cork.
- Legal assistance for families and friends of homicide victims.
- Access for families of homicide victims to the Voluntary Assistance Scheme run by the Bar Council of Ireland.
- Peer support for families and friends of homicide victims by organising two Open Days per year where families can share their experiences, ideas and needs, and a memorial service for victims of homicide.
- Comprehensive contact information on the various support agencies available to you following the homicide.
- We are continuously lobbying for changes in the criminal justice system, including highlighting imbalances as they arise.

Since 2007, AdVIC runs a Subsidised Counselling Service for families and friends of homicide victims.

The trauma experienced following homicide can seriously damage your ability to understand what has happened, your sense of
security, your capacity to cope, and your spirit to carry on. Counselling can play a significantly beneficial role:

- It creates a space where the bereaved feels safe to talk about their feelings.
- It helps people to deal with the enormity of their loss.
- On a practical level it can provide reassurance.
- It helps the bereaved to deal with many of the resultant family problems.
- It assists the bereaved to feel empowered to seek further information.

If you are reading this now and feel counselling might help you, please do not hesitate to contact us by phone or by email. Your contact details will be passed on to our coordinator who will organise referral to one of our specially trained counsellors.

In 2006 and in 2009, AdVIC ran a series of specialised homicide trauma training workshops for professional counsellors, the counsellors who successfully completed the workshops are now part of the AdVIC subsidised counselling scheme which has been in operation since March 2007.

AdVIC initially subsidises up to ten sessions, at a maximum cost of €25 (negotiable) per session for the bereaved person, with AdVIC taking on the remaining cost.
The duration of counselling is reviewed on a case by case basis.
The service is available in:

- The Teacher’s Club, Parnell Square, Dublin City Centre
- Rathfarnham, Dublin 14
- Templeogue, Dublin 16

Outside of Dublin it is available in:

- Arklow
- Carlow
- Cork
- Dundalk/Drogheda
- Kildare
- Kilkenny
- Mountmellick

HOMICIDE BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING GROUPS

Homicide bereavement counselling groups are held once a year in Dublin and in Cork. They run once a week for 10 weeks, and one family member may attend the course. The group is facilitated by two professional counsellors and cost €10 per night (negotiable). To avail of these services, contact the AdVIC counselling coordinator at 087 3148363.

LEGAL ADVICE

AdVIC recognises that from time to time you may have legal issues relating to your family case that will need explanation or clarification. You may also require assistance in drafting letters, liaising with authorities and you may wish to receive general legal advice on such matters.
Through its in-house legal adviser, AdVIC can assist you on a range of legal matters and guide you on the best approach and choreography in relation to your particular case.

Please note the following matters in relation to this service.

1. The service is a preliminary one to give general legal advice and may only start the relevant legal process.
2. AdVIC’s legal adviser cannot therefore offer legal advice indefinitely.
3. This service does not constitute professional legal advice and you are always advised to instruct a firm of solicitors should you wish to pursue your legal issues any further. In this regard, AdVIC and its legal adviser work with specific law firms and barristers and so will be happy to direct you towards those whom we feel may be of assistance, in your particular case.
4. While such early preliminary advices are provided free of charge, any instruction to a solicitors firm will of course incur a cost which you should discuss with the solicitor at your first meeting.
5. AdVIC’s legal adviser may attend any such first meeting at your request and if the legal adviser is of the view that such attendance is appropriate and/or necessary in the circumstances.

Should you require such advices in relation to your individual case you should contact AdVIC who will speak with their legal adviser, who will then contact you.
VOLUNTARY ASSISTANCE SCHEME

In 2007, AdVIC and the Bar Council met to explore how information about the criminal trial process could be communicated to families who find out that an individual has been charged with the homicide and that a trial will follow in a year’s time at best.

The following has been in operation since 2007:

Free Consultation:
The Bar Council Voluntary Assistance Scheme will provide a suitably qualified Barrister to hold a consultation at an early stage in the trial process with the next of kin of a victim of homicide. This consultation will provide information in relation to the criminal trial process and the steps that will occur prior to a trial.

Free Legal Advice:
A family, or individual, needing legal advice must contact AdVIC, as we are required to be the link through which all contact is made. It is necessary for AdVIC to obtain as much detail as possible at the outset, so that it can be presented to The Bar Council.

The Bar Council will then match a lawyer to the query and the assistance may be provided by letter, phone or consultation. If next of kin is resident outside of Dublin, the Bar Council will endeavour to find a suitable qualified barrister in that part of the country.

For more information, and to avail of this free service, families should contact AdVIC who will process the request for consultation.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ORGANISATIONS

AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA State police agency conducting the investigation after a crime and preparing a file for the DPP in order to charge a suspect for the homicide.

BAIL The conditional and temporary release of an accused person pending a trial and/or sentencing.

CHIEF PROSECUTION SOLICITOR Works for the Office of the DPP and is responsible for prosecuting murder and manslaughter cases heard in Dublin, and murder cases heard outside Dublin.

COUNSELLING All the issues arising after a homicide can be overwhelming; discussing them with a trained counsellor can help in coping with the trauma, bereavement, loss and grief. It helps a person work through their feelings and helps them to focus and make decisions.

COURT EXPENSES Financial aid available to families attending homicide trials on request to An Garda Síochána.

CONSULAR SERVICES/EMBASSIES Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs to be contacted when homicide has taken place abroad.

CORONER Independent office holder who inquiries into the circumstances of sudden, unexplained, violent and unnatural deaths.

CORONER’S COURT Court where a Coroner will hold an inquest following a post-mortem result of death from unnatural causes.

CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION TRIBUNAL Organisation set up by the Department of Justice to assess financial compensation claims for victims of crime (family of the victim in the case of homicide).

DEATH CERTIFICATE Available from the District Registrar’s office once the inquest has been completed (after a trial). An Interim Death Certificate can be issued after adjournment of the inquest, but a final Death Certificate can only be made available on completion of a trial.
DPP On behalf of the State, it is the responsibility of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to initiate legal proceedings (initiate a prosecution) following a homicide.

GARDA CHARTER FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME
Charter introduced in October 2006 by An Garda Síochána to outline the Garda service framework when someone has been the victim of crime or traumatic incident.

HOMICIDE A generic legal term for the killing of a person.

INQUEST Inquiry conducted in public by a Coroner into the circumstances surrounding a death.

LOCAL STATE SOLICITOR Works for the Office of the DPP, responsible for manslaughter cases heard outside Dublin.

MANSLAUGHTER A lesser charge than murder, when the accused's actions were in some way provoked or, without intending the killing, the accused was negligent as to whether death would be the result of his/her actions.

MINISTER OF JUSTICE Minister responsible for the many divisions of the criminal justice system and for making the final decision regarding the release/repatriation of certain prisoners convicted of homicide.

MURDER The unlawful killing of a person where the accused intended to kill or cause serious injury.

NUJ (NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALIST) Body representing journalists in Ireland of all media forms (newspaper, radio and TV).

PAROLE BOARD Board set up by the Minister of Justice to review cases of prisoners sentenced to over eight years and advise Minister when parole is been considered.

PRE-TRIAL MEETING Meeting between the prosecution team, the Gardaí and the family of the homicide victim, organised before the trial, to advise the family of the proceedings and help them to understand the process.
POST-MORTEM EXAMINATION The post-mortem examination (autopsy) is a procedure to establish, or clarify, the cause of death.

STATE PATHOLOGIST Doctor who carries out the post-mortem examination and reports its findings at the trial and Coroner’s Court.

SUPPORT AGENCIES Agencies funded by the Commission for the Victims of Crime, staffed by volunteers to give emotional and practical support to Victims of Crime.

VICTIMS CHARTER Charter introduced in 1999 by the State to clarify the levels and standards of treatment victims of crime can expect from the Criminal Justice System.

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT Introduced in the 1993 Criminal Justice Act and expanded to families of homicide victims in the Procedure Act 2010, the Victim Impact Statement gives the opportunity for the family of homicide victims to tell the Court about the impact of the crime on them.

VICTIM LIAISON OFFICER OF PRISON SERVICE Service set up under the provisions of Victims Charter by the Prison Service to inform, on request, victims and families of homicide victims of any significant development in the management of the perpetrator’s sentence as well as any impending release.

VICTIM SUPPORT AT COURT Trained volunteers working within the courts to give emotional and practical support to families and witnesses attending trials.
AdVIC is a Registered Charity (CHY 16399) which assists and supports families bereaved by homicide. Our organisation is run by families who have been bereaved by homicide, so we understand many of the issues you face following the devastating loss of someone you love, or someone who is close to you.

The information available on this booklet is intended as a guide only. It does not purport to be, nor should it be relied upon as, advice.
HOMICIDE

A GUIDE FOR
BEREAVED FAMILIES

Advice, Entitlements and Services

AdVIC is a registered Charity (CHY 16399)
AdVIC receives funding from the Commission for the Victims of Crime