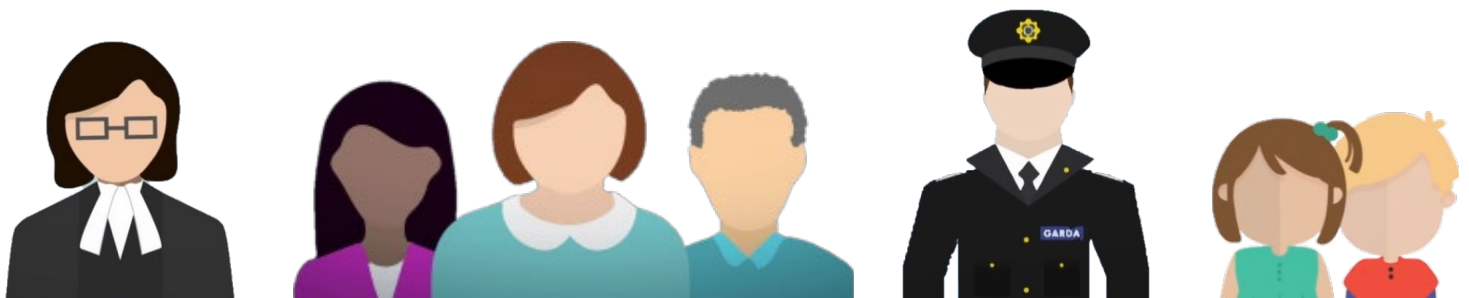




Freephone **116006**

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Listening. Supporting. Informing.





## Contents

Patron's Welcome.....	2
Message from Chairperson.....	3
Executive Director's Introduction.....	4
About Crime Victims Helpline.....	5
How We Helped.....	6
Financial Overview.....	12
Board of Directors and Staff.....	14
Charity and Company Information.....	15



## Patron's Welcome

2020 was a difficult year. It was marked by uncertainty for all of us and isolation for many. It is times like these when the supports provided by the Crime Victims Helpline are so vitally needed. No one should have to suffer alone.

I would like to express gratitude to the volunteers and staff who answer the calls, emails and texts. Their care, empathy and professionalism make a huge difference in the lives of so many.

I would also like to thank the Department of Justice and the Dormant Accounts Fund for their support. In a time of so many competing priorities, it is right and heartening that the needs of victims of crime in Ireland continue to be acknowledged.

I wish you all a brighter future of healing and health.

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

## Message from the Chairperson

This report outlines the work carried out in 2020 to support victims of crime. Crime Victims Helpline offers support to all victims of crime in Ireland by supporting, informing, and empowering them, and all those impacted by crime.

We are supported in our work by many stakeholders such as the Department of Justice, the Charities Regulator, An Garda Síochána, as well as the other providers of support to victims of crime, and we are grateful for the advice and guidance that is always forthcoming. We will continue to reach out and engage with all stakeholders in our efforts to support anyone impacted by crime.

This report reflects another year of tremendous achievement and the staff and volunteers deserve enormous credit. Our Executive Director, Michele Puckhaber, supported by her team of staff and volunteers continue to deliver wonderful support, (at times when victims are in great need and feeling extremely vulnerable), through a combination of expertise and personal touch. The unprecedented challenges presented by the Covid 19 Pandemic were managed successfully with no adverse impact on service provision. The commitment, effort and hard work of every member of the team is noteworthy and I thank them all most sincerely on behalf of the Board.

The Board recognises our obligations to ensure that the Crime Victims Helpline operates to the highest standards of governance; we will continue to operate in accordance with the Charities Governance Code published by the Charities Regulator. We will continue to operate in a transparent and responsible manner and provide appropriate guidance and strategic input to help enhance and develop the Crime Victims Helpline into the future.

The Board appreciates the ongoing support in terms of funding from the Department of Justice and, on behalf of the victims of crime that we provide a service for, I offer our thanks to the Minister and the Department for this vital support.

I thank the volunteer Board of Directors for their continuing support and commitment throughout the year; we will strive to ensure that the Crime Victims Helpline continues to provide you with the support you have come to know and trust.

Brendan Lynott  
Chairperson

## Executive Director's Introduction

2020 was a year that tested the resilience and fortitude of individuals, families and the community. Navigating a pandemic is not easy, but it was especially difficult for people attempting to cope and recover after a crime. While many categories of crime decreased, other crimes increased behind closed doors. Victimisation in the home in the form of domestic violence assault and coercive control thrived in the isolation and claustrophobia of Covid restrictions. Cybercrime also flourished as criminals took advantage of people's increased reliance on technology for connection and productivity.

CVH saw a 15% increase in people contacting us for help in 2020. On top of the increase, contacts with the helpline became longer and more intense. Many people we spoke to needed extra support and time to assist them in navigating the trauma of crime on top of the trauma of the pandemic. As 2020 progressed, calls from people having suicidal thoughts went from a rare to a frequent occurrence.

The mental health strain of 2020 will continue to ripple for years to come. Court closures will mean further delays for victims awaiting justice in a process that was already lengthy before the pandemic. Some victims put their lives on hold as they wait for the outcome of a Garda investigation or their day in court. Others work hard to move past the trauma only to be thrust back into it years later by the need to provide testimony or write a victim impact statement. It is my hope that the technological advances within the Criminal Justice System necessitated by Covid restrictions will continue to be used to increase the speed at which cases move from investigation to final resolution.

Despite the challenges of 2020, progress was made throughout the criminal justice system to bring greater clarity and awareness of the legal rights of victims of crime. Through gestures large and small, the Gardaí, Director of Public Prosecutions, Court Services, and Probation Services continue to make important shifts in focus to victims. Notably, the Director of Public Prosecutions updated their [website](#) to bring greater emphasis on information important to victims. The Department of Justice launched a [website](#) to highlight the new and improved Victims' Charter. CVH was proud to be consulted by many organisations within the criminal justice system who were looking for ways to better serve victims and their families. We will continue to shine a light on the needs and rights of all victims of crime in Ireland.

The incredible CVH team of staff and volunteers, displaying tremendous flexibility and willingness to learn along the way, provided support and information to service users throughout 2020 without interruption. Despite the move from the office to home, to the office and back home again, a request for help never went unanswered.

Thank you to all the volunteers, staff, directors and community partners who contributed to CVH in 2020. Thank you as well to the Department of Justice for their on-going financial support that makes the work of CVH possible.

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 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 support services.

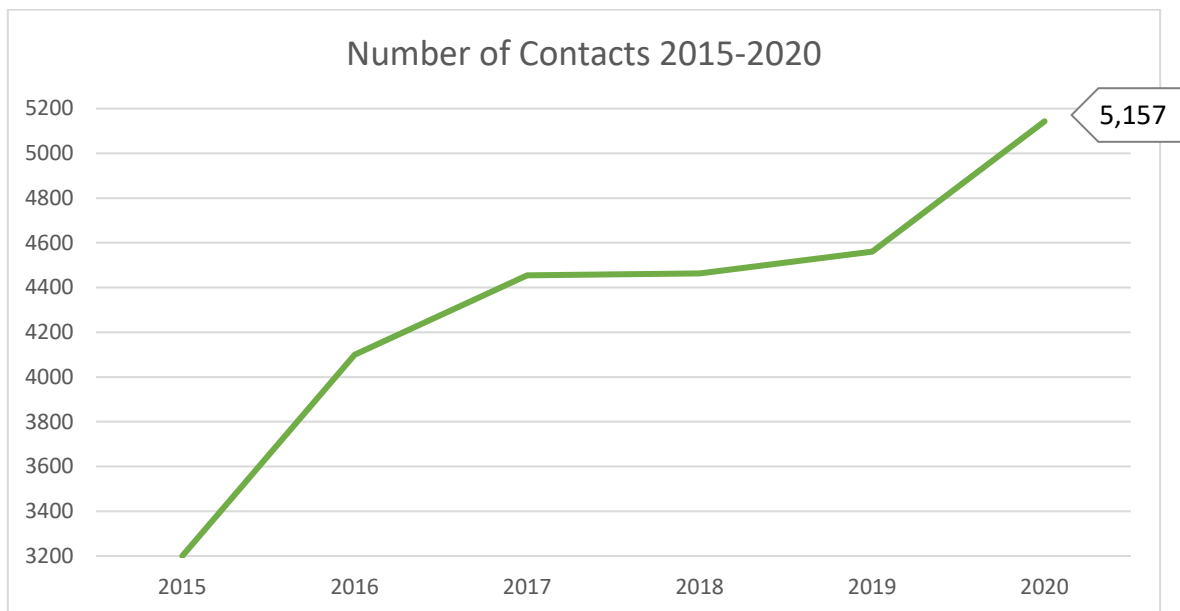
[CrimeVictimsHelpline.ie](https://www.crimevictims.ie) contains extensive information regarding the impact of crime on victims as well as information about the criminal justice system and other services that assist victims of crime. We are active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (@CrimeVictimLine).

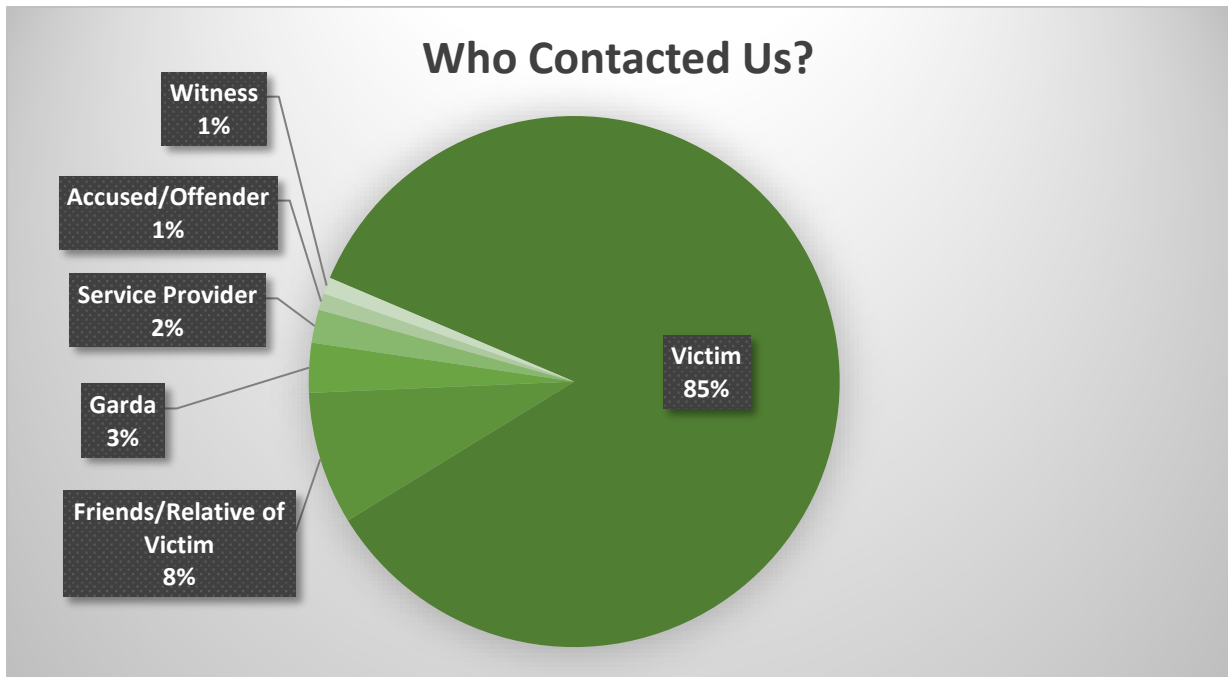


## How We Helped in 2020

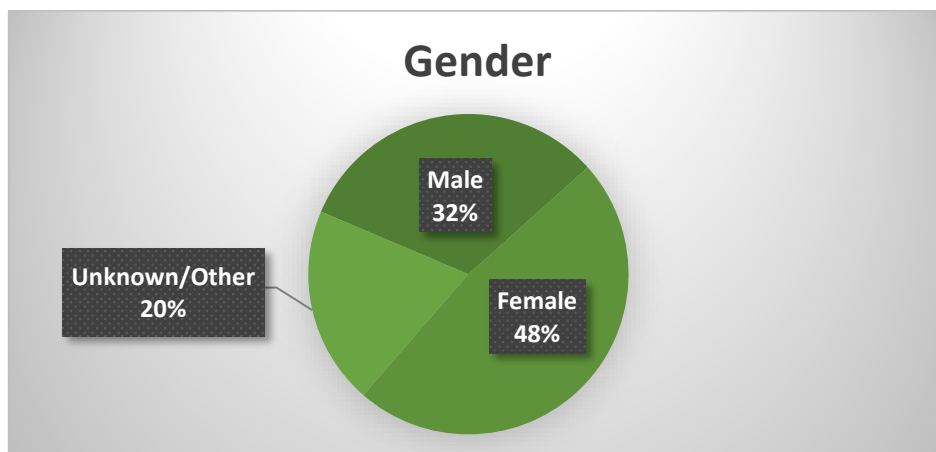
*"I want to say thank you for hearing me, supporting me and giving me all the information I need, to keep me strong. I can't even tell you how much that all does for someone who is going through this. I am incredibly grateful, you gave me great strength today. It's so good to experience genuinely good people."*

Despite the overall decrease in reported crime, contacts with the Crime Victims Helpline increased 15% in 2020. The Helpline handled 1,900 more contacts in 2020 than it did just five years ago.





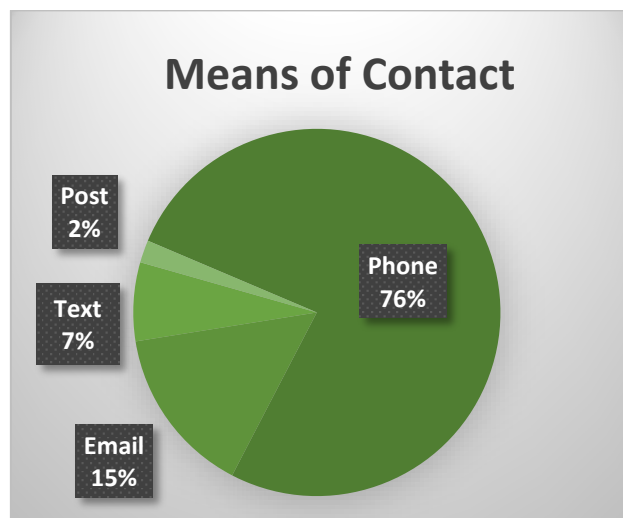
Most of the contacts (85%) came directly from victims of crime with the remaining coming from friends and family (8%), Gardaí and other service providers such as social workers, counsellors and GPs (5%). CVH welcomes contact from anyone looking for emotional support, information about the criminal justice system and/or referrals to other victim support services.



CVH records the gender of the person contacting us if they self-identify but we do not generally ask for this information or make assumptions about the gender of a service user. An exception to this is in relation to domestic violence where separate services exist for men and women.

Primary Purpose of Contacts	Percentage of Contacts
Information about the Criminal Justice System	34%
Emotional Support	33%
Follow-up	20%
Referrals to Other Services	8%
Ongoing Safety Concerns	3%
Information about Compensation	2%

The purpose of contacts with the helpline are tracked through six categories: Emotional Support, Information about the Criminal Justice System, Information about Compensation, Ongoing Safety Concerns, Referral to Other Services, and Follow-up. Follow-up are contacts that are made to callers who request we call them at a later date (usually the following week) after their initial contact with the helpline. Most contacts with CVH touch upon a number of areas but only the primary purpose, as determined by the CVH team member who assisted the service user, is recorded.



Despite the circumstances of 2020, the means by which people contacted us did not change significantly from previous years. The vast majority of service users contacted CVH by phone on freephone 116 006. Email (including messages sent through the CVH website) was the second most popular means of communication followed by text. Post is primarily used to send information and leaflets (both CVH and for other victim support organisations) to people at their request.

Crime	Number of Contacts
Harassment	676
Assault	655
Rape/Sexual Assault	146
Criminal Damage	124
Burglary	113
Fraud	111
Theft	106
Child Abuse (Historic)	76
Other	70
Road Traffic Accident	57
Robbery	57
Threats to Kill	51
Antisocial Behaviour	48
Blackmail	46
Stalking	45
Vehicle Theft	26
Homicide	23
Child Abuse (Recent)	22
Coercive Control	22
Arson	14
Manslaughter	4

CVH saw an incredible 135% increase in contacts related to domestic violence. The increase reflects the difficulty and danger the pandemic placed people in (primarily women and children) who are subjected to coercive control and violence in the home.

There was also a 66% increase in contacts related to fraud, a 59% increase in contacts related to blackmail, most of which occurred online, and a 34% increase in reports of stalking.

As in previous years, harassment and assault were the crimes most impacting people reaching out to CVH.

People do not always disclose the crime they have been impacted by and we also receive contacts from people who are not victims of crime such as those looking for support or advice around civil or family law matters.

The charts show the crimes disclosed to CVH in 2020 and of those, how many were related to domestic violence or hate crimes.

Motivation	Number of Contacts
Domestic Violence	326
LGBTQ Hate Crime	7
Racist Hate Crime	22

County	Percentage of CVH Contacts	Percentage of ROI Population
Dublin	43%	28%
Meath	7%	4%
Cork	6%	11.5%
Louth	5%	5%
Wicklow	4%	3%
Galway	4%	5.5%
Limerick	3%	3%
Sligo	3%	2.5%
Donegal	2%	3%
Kerry	2%	2%
Kildare	2%	4%
Tipperary	2%	3%
Waterford	2%	1%
Westmeath	2%	3%
Wexford	2%	2.5%
Cavan	1%	2%
Clare	1%	3%
Kilkenny	1%	1%
Laois	1%	3%
Leitrim	1%	1%
Longford	1%	1%
Mayo	1%	2%
Monaghan	1%	1%
Carlow	1%	2%
Offaly	1%	2%
Roscommon	1%	1%

Crime Victims Helpline is a national service and it is a priority that we are known and accessible across Ireland.

Through the free 116 006 helpline, text number, email, and website, someone from the northernmost tip of Donegal to the southernmost shores of Cork has equal access to support and information from CVH.

As in years past, in 2020 the percentage of contacts with CVH were roughly proportionate to the population distribution of Ireland. Exceptions to this are Dublin, which is over represented and Cork which is underrepresented.

It would be preferable to compare crime statistics to the number of contacts but county specific crime statistics are not publicly available.

Resource	Number of Referrals
Garda Victims Service Office (GVSO)	776
Gardaí	445
Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC)	256
Garda Ombudsman (GSOC)	93
Counselling (Including Counselling in Primary Care Scheme)	96
Women's Aid National Helpline/Domestic Violence Services	88
Federation of Victim Assistance	75
Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal	58
Homeless/Housing Services/Local Authority	37
Rape Crisis Helpline/Sexual Assault Services	34
Support After Crime	34
GP	30
DPP Victim Liaison Unit	26
Samaritans/Pieta House	30
Victim Support at Court	22
Connect	20
One in Four	19
iReport/Immigrant Council/Inar	17
Anyman (now Men's Aid)	16
Support After Homicide/Advic	16
St. Vincent de Paul	15
Care After Prison	14
Parentline	11
Irish Road Victims' Association/PARC Road Safety Group	10
International Victim Support Organisations	9
CARI	8
Seniors Alert Scheme	8
Citizens Information/Mabs	8
DEASP/INTREO	6
Sage Advocacy	6
Male Advice Line	5
Court Services	5
Tusla	5
LGBT Ireland	5
Aware	4
Childline/Teenline	4
Crisis Text Line	4
Irish Prison Service Victim Liaison	2
ITAS	1
Other	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>2383</b>

2,383 referrals were provided to over 60 different organisations, supports and resources. This illustrates the wide and diverse needs of people who are impacted by crime.

By far the most frequent referral was to Garda Victim Service Offices. This highlights what a vital resource these offices have become for victims since their inception in 2015.

CVH provides ongoing training, education and updates to keep staff and volunteers up-to-date with the victim support sector, criminal justice system and other resources that are available to our service users.

**CRIME VICTIMS HELPLINE**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

	2020	2019
	€	€
Income	127,639	120,920
<b>Gross income</b>	<u>127,639</u>	<u>120,920</u>
Administrative expenses	(118,651)	(121,055)
<b>Surplus/(deficit) before taxation</b>	<u>8,988</u>	<u>(135)</u>
Tax on surplus/(deficit)	-	-
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year</b>	<u><u>8,988</u></u>	<u><u>(135)</u></u>

**CRIME VICTIMS HELPLINE**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020**

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
	€	€
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	799	608
Cash at bank and in hand	45,009	22,086
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
	<b>45,808</b>	22,694
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<b>(7,901)</b>	<b>(8,484)</b>
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>37,907</b>	14,210
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/> <b>37,907</b>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/> <b>14,210</b>
Deferred income	<b>(20,037)</b>	<b>(5,328)</b>
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>17,870</b>	<b>8,882</b>
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
<b>Funds of the Organisation</b>		
Accumulated funds	<b>17,870</b>	8,882
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
<b>Members' funds</b>	<b>17,870</b>	<b>8,882</b>
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>



## **Board of Directors**

Brendan Lynott, Chairperson

Eileen Brady, Company Secretary

Michael Tyndall, Treasurer

Tony Hickey (resigned 2021)

Naoise Kelly

Simon Treanor

Paul Williams

## **Staff**

Michele Puckhaber – Executive Director

Marie Murray – Helpline Support Worker

Breda Connolly and Klaudia Jarosz- Helpline Assistants

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

CVH audited financial accounts for 2020 are available on our [website](#).



**An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
agus Comhionannais**  
Department of Justice  
and Equality



ciste na  
gcuntas díomhaoin  
the dormant  
accounts fund

Crime Victims Helpline is a registered charity—16894 (CRO), 20061890 (Charities Regulator)

Company Limited by Guarantee 409235

Registered Office—6 to7 Hanover Street East, Dublin 2, D02 W320