



ENGLANTI

# SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL CRIMES IN THE CRIMINAL PROCESS

Victim Support Finland (RIKU) Guides ● 1 (Updated 10.5.2022) Victim Support Finland's brochures and guidebooks: [riku.fi/oppaat](https://riku.fi/oppaat)

## SEXUAL CRIME

- Rape and most of the other sexual offences are crimes subject to public prosecution.  
If the crime is reported to the police, they can investigate it and the prosecutor can take it to court. The police can begin a pre-trial investigation even if the victim does not report the crime.
  - You are entitled to a legal counsel, free of charge, when the crime is a sexual crime as stated in the Criminal Code Chapter 20. This is unrelated to your income and assets.
  - You may be given a free-of-charge legal counsel already at the pre-trial investigation stage. Even if the case is not taken to court later. It is enough that you tell to the police that you will claim for compensation. When the prosecutor is pressing charges your legal counsel may help you to prepare detailed demands for the compensation and present them at the trial. RIKU can help you to obtain a legal counsel.
- Go to the doctor as soon as possible, for the necessary treatment and examinations.
- A medical certificate will be important if a trial is held. With your permission, the police will request the medical certificate.
- Save all possible evidence.
- If the victim is a minor (under 18), the police and the child protection authorities will be informed.

## REPORTING AN OFFENCE

- The sooner you report the offence, the easier it will be for the police to solve the crime.
- You can file a report at any police station.
- You can ask for a free support person at RIKU to help you file the report and to assist you during the pre-trial investigation interview at the police.
- If you wish, you can ask for a quiet space in which to report the offence.
- You are entitled to written confirmation that you have filed a report.
- The pre-trial investigation can only begin if the crime has been reported. The police will make the decision on whether to start a pre-trial investigation.

**FROM RIKU YOU CAN ASK FOR A SUPPORT PERSON** to assist you in reporting an offence, in the pre-trial investigation, in court or in any other situations.

**You also have the right to the following:**

- To report the offence in your own language.
- To have the relevant documents translated.
- To have an interpreter at the police interview and trial.
- To obtain information about the release of a prisoner in certain cases.

## PRE-TRIAL INVESTIGATION

- You are advised to tell the police all that you know of the event and you have to tell the truth.
- Alongside you, the police may evaluate the need for special protection (for example, making hearing room or trial arrangements in such a way that you do not suffer unnecessarily during the criminal proceedings).
- They may videotape the hearing of a minor. In some cases, they may videotape the hearing of an adult.
- In the pre-trial investigation, the police will ask you if you wish to demand compensation. If you demand compensation, you will be able to decide on the actual sum later, after consulting your legal counsel on the matter.
- You will be able to request that your contact information is not given to the suspect.
- You can obtain a copy of the finished pre-trial investigation report free of charge.
- If, based on the investigation, someone is suspected of committing a crime, the case will progress to the consideration of charges.

## TRIAL

- If the prosecutor accuses the person suspected of the crime, you will be sent an invitation to the trial by the District Court. You will have to be present at the trial. You will need a special reason for being absent: For example, you will have to provide a doctor's certificate about any illness that prevents you from attending the trial.
- The trial will be held in the court in the same district where the crime was committed.
- It is possible that a minor will not be asked to attend the trial. In such a case, a videotaped hearing will be watched in court.
- You can obtain a support person, free of charge, from RIKU, who will attend the trial with you.
- Your legal counsel will be with you at the trial and will present your demands.
- Your task is to tell the court truthfully what happened.
- You can ask for special arrangements (for example, a screen) to avoid facing the person accused of the crime. The RIKU support person or your legal counsel can help you with these arrangements.
- The trial can be held totally or partially closed to the public, meaning that there will be no extra people in the courtroom.
- A sentence may be issued on the same day or at another announced time.
- The judgment can be appealed against at the Court of Appeal. Your legal counsel will help you with the appeal.




## ASK FOR HELP.

### RIKU WILL SUPPORT YOU AT ALL STAGES OF THE CRIMINAL PROCESS.

Victim Support Finland (RIKU) will help you at all of the various stages. Together, we can seek other help in your local region, for example other important support such as crisis support and legal aid.

## VICTIM SUPPORT FINLAND 116 006

Lawyer Phone Service 0800 161 177  
RIKUchat (riku.fi/chat)

   /rikosuhripaivystys

 riku.fi

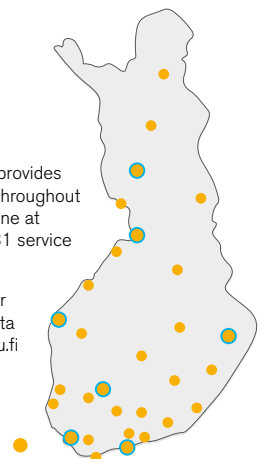
Activities are supported by the ministry of justice.



This leaflet was written together with the National Institute for Health and Welfare Finland (THL).

Victim Support Finland provides support free of charge throughout Finland – online, by phone at 7 regional offices and 31 service points.

Information about all our services and contact data is available online at riku.fi



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