



# Easy Read issues paper

## The Criminal Justice System

### Easy read

This is an Easy Read document.

Some words are in **bold**.

We tell you what they mean at the end.

You can ask for help to read this document. A family member or friend or support person may be able to help you.

### Introduction

The **Royal Commission** into **Violence, Abuse, Neglect** and **Exploitation** of People with Disability is looking at people with disability in Australia and their

- Safety
- Treatment
- Rights, and
- Supports

We call it the Royal Commission.

We want to know about the experiences of people with disability in the **criminal justice system**.

The criminal justice system deals with **criminal offences**. This is also called breaking the law.

It includes

- Police and detectives
- Lawyers including Legal Aid
- Courts including judges
- **Victim** support groups and services
- Community **corrections officers**
- Prisons and corrections officers

## Issue

People with disability are more likely to be involved with the criminal justice system.

This might be because

- You are more likely to be a victim,
- You may have broken the law or be a witness to a crime
- You do not understand the law and your rights
- You have difficulty speaking up for yourself or being listened to

- You do not or cannot ask for help
- You have a behaviour because of your disability that other people do not like.

You might also have other high **risks** like

- You are homeless or poor
- You are **First Nations**
- You are from another country
- You do not speak English

There are also less disability supports in the criminal justice system so you are at higher risk when you are in the system.

## Questions

These questions have been written as thinking points.

You can tell us about other issues and experiences too.

1. Tell us about experiences with the criminal justice system
  - For you
  - For other people you know.
2. Violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation happen a lot to people with disability in the criminal justice system. Tell us
  - Why you think this happens

- What changes could make it safer

3. Tell us

- what you think would protect people with disability in the criminal justice system
- about problems you've had staying safe

4. Many people with disability need support to deal with the criminal justice system. Tell us

- What supports would make them equal with people with no disability
- When they need supports if they are
  - A victim
  - A witness giving evidence
  - Accused of a crime
  - Found guilty of a crime
  - On a **jury**
- What would be good supports

5. Tell us how violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation change for different groups of people. This might include

- Their **gender** or **sexual identity**
- Their age
- Their **culture**

- Where they live

6. Tell us about the experiences of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation for First Nations people in the criminal justice system.

This might include

- Services appropriate for their culture
- The supports young First Nations people need
- What would help First Nations people to move out of the criminal justice system

7. Many people with disability find it hard to tell someone and get help to deal with violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in the criminal justice system.

Tell us

- What stops people from speaking up
- What needs to change to make it easier for people to ask for help

8. Violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation against people with disability in the criminal justice system is not always **investigated**.

Tell us

- What stops these problems being investigated
- What needs to change so these problems are investigated properly

9. Are there any other thoughts or ideas you would like to share?

## Support

If you are feeling upset by thinking about what is in this paper or things that have happened to you, you can get free help for how you feel.

Contact Blue Knot on the National Counselling and Referral Service.

If you are worried about talking to us or making a submission, you can get free legal help from

- National Legal Aid and
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services.

More information about these supports is on our website: [Disability Royal](#)

[Commission - legal and emotional supports](#)

## Have your say

We want to hear about your experiences and opinions on the criminal justice system.

You can do this by

- Telling us what you think about the things in this issues paper
- Making a submission

The questions and information in this paper are for ideas only.

You can tell us about other things that have happened.

Your response will not be made public if you do not want it to be.

## How to tell us what you think about this issues paper

Information and questions are included in this paper to help you tell the Royal Commission your thoughts. You can do this by

- Email to [DRCEnquiries@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:DRCEnquiries@royalcommission.gov.au)
- Letter to GPO Box 1422, BRISBANE QLD 4001, or
- Phone on **1800 517 199**.

We would like to hear from you before 20 March 2020

Please let us know if you need more time.

## Make a submission

You can make submissions about your experiences by going to our website

[Disability Royal Commission - make a submission](#)

## Word List

### Abuse

If someone is treating you badly.

### Advocacy

When someone speaks up for themselves or someone who cannot speak out

## **Bold**

Dark writing like **this** is bold.

## **Corrections Officer**

The people who are paid to take care of the safety and behaviour of people who break the law.

This might be in prison or in the community.

## **Criminal Justice System**

All things that deal with someone breaking the law.

This includes police and courts. It also includes prisons and victim support groups.

## **Criminal offence**

This is also called breaking the law.

## **Culture**

Culture is the way we live.

It comes from our family and society. It can include language and food.

## **Emotional**

To do with the way you feel.

## **Exploitation**



If someone is taking advantage of you.

### **First Nations**

Name used for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **Gender**

Whether people are male or female, non-binary or another gender.

### **Investigated**

When someone looks for the facts about a problem and deals with it.

### **Jury**

People from the public who listen to evidence and decide if someone is guilty.

### **Legal**

To do with the law.

### **LGBTQI**

Stands for lesbian gay bisexual transgender intersex and queer or questioning.

### **Neglect**

If someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you.

### **Risks**

These are things that make you more likely to be hurt or treated badly.

## **Royal Commission**

A formal public inquiry.

It is an official way of looking into a big problem and working out what went wrong.

## **Sexual Identity**

The type of people someone is sexually attracted to.

There are many types including heterosexuality and homosexuality.

## **Victim**

A victim is someone who has something bad happen to them.

This can include violence or abuse.

## **Violence**

If someone is hurting your body.