

Can I get compensation?

Western Australia

If you have been injured in a violent act, including if you survived childhood sexual abuse, you may be able to get compensation. You might want compensation for the injury you have experienced and/or to recover money you've paid or will need to pay as a result of the injury you have experienced.

You might be able to get compensation by:

- making an application for Criminal Injuries Compensation;
- taking legal action against the person and/or institution responsible for your injuries (civil claim);
- applying to an institutional redress scheme; or
- applying to the National Redress Scheme.

It is important that you get legal advice about the best option, so contact knowmore.

What is the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme?

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme provides compensation to people who are injured as the result of a criminal offence that occurred on or after 22 January 1971.

Can I make an application?

If you've experienced an injury as the result of a crime, you may be able to apply for compensation. An 'injury' includes mental and nervous shock.

What support can I get?

If you were injured, you can make an application for compensation for:

- pain and suffering;
- loss of enjoyment of life;
- treatment costs, such as medical and counselling expenses; and
- loss of earnings, if you were working at the time.

How long do I have to make a claim?

Usually you have three years from when the crime took place to make an application for compensation. However, an extension of time can be granted where it is 'just to do so'. Evidence from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse could be used to argue for an extension of time in relation to child sexual abuse matters.

Where a person is under 18 years of age, an application may be made by a parent or guardian on the child's behalf.

How do I make an application?

You can send an application form to the Chief Assessor of Criminal Injuries Compensation. You can obtain the application form at www.courts.dotag.wa.gov.au or by contacting the Criminal Injuries Compensation office on (08) 9425 3250.

It is important to include supporting documents with your application, like medical reports, police reports and financial receipts and statements.

Can I get counselling?

Yes, any victim of a violent crime can get free, confidential counselling. You can contact knowmore or call the Victims Support Service on (08) 9425 2850 to discuss your situation.

Do I have to have made a report to the Police?

Yes. It is necessary for you to do everything you can to assist the police in the identification, apprehension or prosecution of the offender. You still must do this even if the crime happened a long time ago.

What if the person who injured me is deceased?

This does not prevent you from making an application for criminal injuries compensation.

Does someone have to be charged?

No, the person who injured you does not have to be charged for you to receive compensation.

Will the person who injured me find out?

Yes, in most cases the convicted offender will be told about your application for compensation.

If you are worried about the person finding out, contact knowmore for help.

Will I have to go to Court?

No, but you might be asked to attend a hearing before an Assessor. However, such hearings are not common and are normally conducted in private.

Can I make an application for criminal injuries compensation if I have already received money through a civil claim or Redress WA?

This will depend on your individual circumstances. We encourage you to contact knowmore to receive legal advice on this issue.

Taking legal action against the person or institution (civil claims)

You might be able to “sue” the person and/or institution responsible for your injuries. These claims are often called “civil claims”,

How long do I have to make a civil claim?

If you experienced child sexual abuse in Western Australia, there is now no time limit for making a civil claim. These types of applications are very complicated and you should get a lawyer to help you with the claim. knowmore can help you find lawyers who are experienced with childhood sexual abuse claims.

What is an institutional redress scheme?

Some institutions like the Catholic Church might accept complaints where there has been physical, emotional and sexual abuse committed by their staff or that occurred within the institution.

These complaints go through what is often called an “institutional redress scheme”. Sometimes these schemes will pay compensation and provide other support, such as counselling.

These schemes are very different to the options already talked about. If you would like to know more about them and whether one is available to you, contact knowmore.

National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse

The Australian Government established the National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional childhood sexual abuse. The scheme commenced on 1 July 2018 and is accepting applications until 30 June 2027. You can find more information by calling **1800 737 337** or visiting www.nationalredress.gov.au. The WA Government and many of the large non-government institutions have now joined the scheme.

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