

Chapter 4 Efforts to Improve the System of Support Crime Victims, etc.

1 Consultation and Provision of Information, etc.

(related to Article 11 of the Basic Act)

○ Major efforts

- Establishing “comprehensive response desks” in local governments and providing information to local residents

[Policy No. 150]

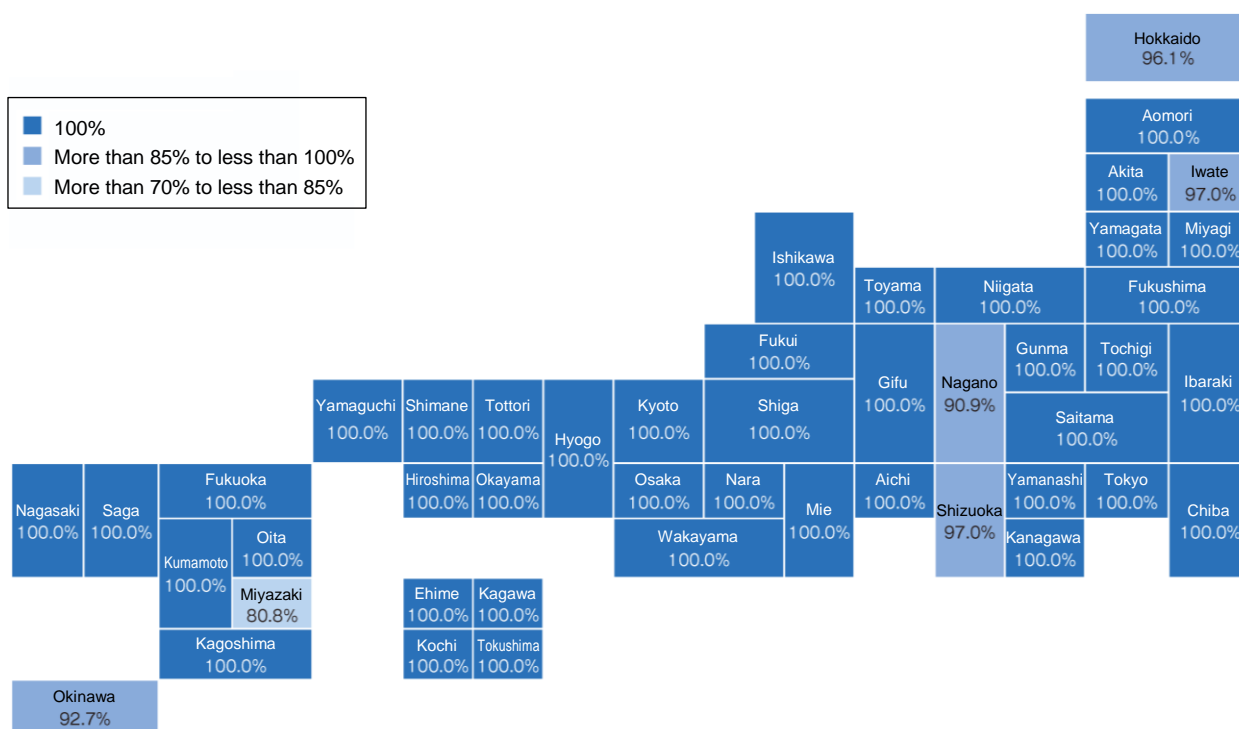
The National Police Agency has been periodically confirming whether municipality’s responsible division for policies for crime victims, etc. (hereinafter referred to as “Crime Victim Policy Division”) has finalized. Since FY 2016, Responsible Division for Policies of every municipality has finalized. The Agency requests municipalities, through various opportunities, such as seminars for municipalities’ staff and meetings of prefectural/ordinance-designated cities’

crime victim policy division secretariats, to establish a comprehensive response desk to offer proper information to crime victims, etc. As of April 2017, 1,697 municipalities out of 1,721 (includes 23 wards in Tokyo, except for ordinance-designated cities) have a comprehensive response desk. From FY 2013 onward, all prefectures and ordinance-designated cities have established a comprehensive response desk.

Support policies for crime victims taken by the Crime Victim Policy Division and the comprehensive response desk in prefectures, and by ordinance-designated cities are shown on the Agency’s website “Policies for Crime Victims, etc.”

(<http://www.npa.go.jp/hanzaihigai/local/madoguchi/madoguchi.html>) to make it known to nationwide.

Municipal Comprehensive Response Desk in Each Prefecture
(Including 23 wards in Tokyo, except for ordinance-designated cities) (as of April, 2017)



- Employment of professionals in local governments and reinforcement of cooperation and collaboration with them

[Policy No. 152]

To promote effective livelihood support for crime victims, etc., the National Police Agency has been encouraging municipalities, through seminars for municipalities’ staff and meetings of prefectural/ordinance-designated cities’ crime victim policy division secretariats, to

utilize social welfare workers, psychiatric social workers, and clinical psychotherapists, and to cooperate and collaborate more with the comprehensive response desk and relevant institutions/groups.

As of April 2017, 10 prefectures/ordinance-designated cities and 39 municipalities have such experts at the comprehensive response desk.

- **Improvement of counseling system in the police**

[Policy No. 169]

The police have been increasing female police officers in charge of sexual crime investigation so that victims can consult a male or female police officer, whichever preferable to the consuler and that if such a staff is off-duty, another duty person responds to the consuler to have a person in charge take over the job.

- **Consideration of support provided by the Japan Legal Support Center**

[Policy No. 186]

Under the Partial Revision of the Comprehensive Legal Support Act enacted in May 2016, a new legal consultation aid service was to be established and enforced by June 2018, which does not matters the financial capacities of victims of domestic violence, stalking, and child abuse.

Column 4

▶ **Revision of Comprehensive Legal Support Act**

Under the Partial Revision of the Comprehensive Legal Support Act enacted in May 2016, an act governing the Japan Legal Support Center (known as “Houterasu”) was established. The revision is aimed to expand legal support for: 1) the elderly or handicapped persons who lack cognitive capacities, 2) the victims of large-scale disasters, and 3) the victims of stalking, etc. Here, we outline a new legal support service for victims of stalking, etc.

1. **What Houterasu is:**

The Houterasu is a corporation established in April 2006, based on the Comprehensive Legal Support Act. It aims, as a basic principle, to create a society in which the provision of information and support necessary to settle disputes based on laws concerning criminal as well as civil cases can be received throughout the country.

Since the start of its services in October 2006, the Houterasu has been providing crime victims with information on legal systems and consultation centers; referring lawyers with experience and understanding in supporting crime victims; and for crime victims who are not financially capable, by using civil legal aid, providing free legal consultation and making advance payment of fees for an attorney's, etc.

2. **Purpose of the foundation of the legal support service for victims of stalking, etc.**

Because stalking, child abuse and domestic violence tend to progress rapidly to recurrence causing serious damage on the life and body, urgent measures are needed to prevent in the early stage before such crimes may come to surface and become more serious.

Even if such crimes are difficult to be dealt as criminal cases due to inadequate evidence, lawyers can properly respond to prevent the progress to serious damage by advising effective measures, such as petitions for provisional disposition or orders for protection.

The conventional civil legal aid was applied only to victims who are not financially capable, and criminal cases were excluded from legal consultation aid service. The new service established under the partial revision of the Act enables the Houterasu to provide legal consultation to victims of stalking, etc. including criminal cases, regardless of their financial capacities.

3. **Contents of the new legal support service for victims of stalking, etc.**

- (1) Eligible persons

A victim and a plausible victim (including those who are financially capable) of “stalking” specified in the Anti-Stalking Law; “child abuse” specified in the Act on the Prevention, etc. of Child Abuse; and “spousal violence” specified in the Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims (hereinafter referred to as “DV Prevention Act”), (these offenses are collectively called “Specific infringements.”)

- (2) Contents of legal support service

Legal consultation to protect victims against recurrence of damage, including cases reported to the police and cases related to protective orders under the DV Prevention Act (including criminal cases)

- (3) Consultation fee

If a victim's means exceeds the standard decided by the Houterasu, he/she must bear

- the fee.
- (4) Date of enforcement
The service is to be enforced by June 2, 2018.

2 Promotion of Research Studies, etc. (related to Article 21 of the Basic Act)

○ Major efforts

- Considering conducting research to grasp the situation of crime victims, etc.

[Policy No. 210]

In January 2017, the Public Relations Office of the Cabinet Office conducted an opinion poll on the policies for crime victims, etc. in cooperation with the National Police Agency.

Column 5

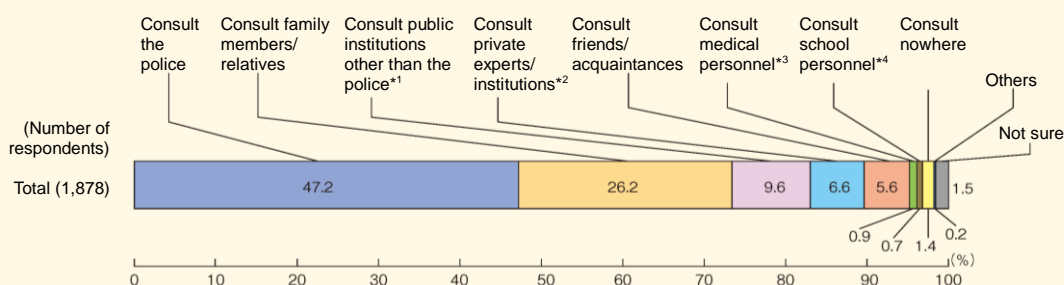
Opinion Poll on Policies for Crime Victims, etc.

In FY 2016, the Public Relations Office of the Cabinet Office conducted “an opinion poll on the policies for crime victims, etc.” in cooperation with the National Police Agency, in order to know people’s consciousness and refer in the future. The survey was about people’s awareness of the policies, consultation bodies and help desks for crime victims, etc., as well as about whom they consult when they should suffer a crime that tends to be hidden. The results are as follows (for detail, see the website of Cabinet Office “Opinion Poll”: <http://survey.gov-online.go.jp/tokubetu/tindex-h28.html>).

The answers to the questions about whom people would consult if herself or her family suffer from a crime such as sexual crime, damage of which tends to be hidden were “the police” 47.2%, “family members or relatives” 26.2%, and “nowhere” 1.4%.

The reasons for choice were: such advisors are “familiar existence” 48.4%, “seem to protect their safety” 45.4%, “seem to keep secrets” 39.2%, and “seem to listen sympathetically” 38.9%.

Whom people would consult if they suffer from a crime that tends to be hidden (sexual crime, stalking, spousal violence, child prostitution/pornography/abuse) (single answer):



*1 Consult public institutions other than police (Women’s Counseling Office, Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Center, Child Guidance Center, etc.)

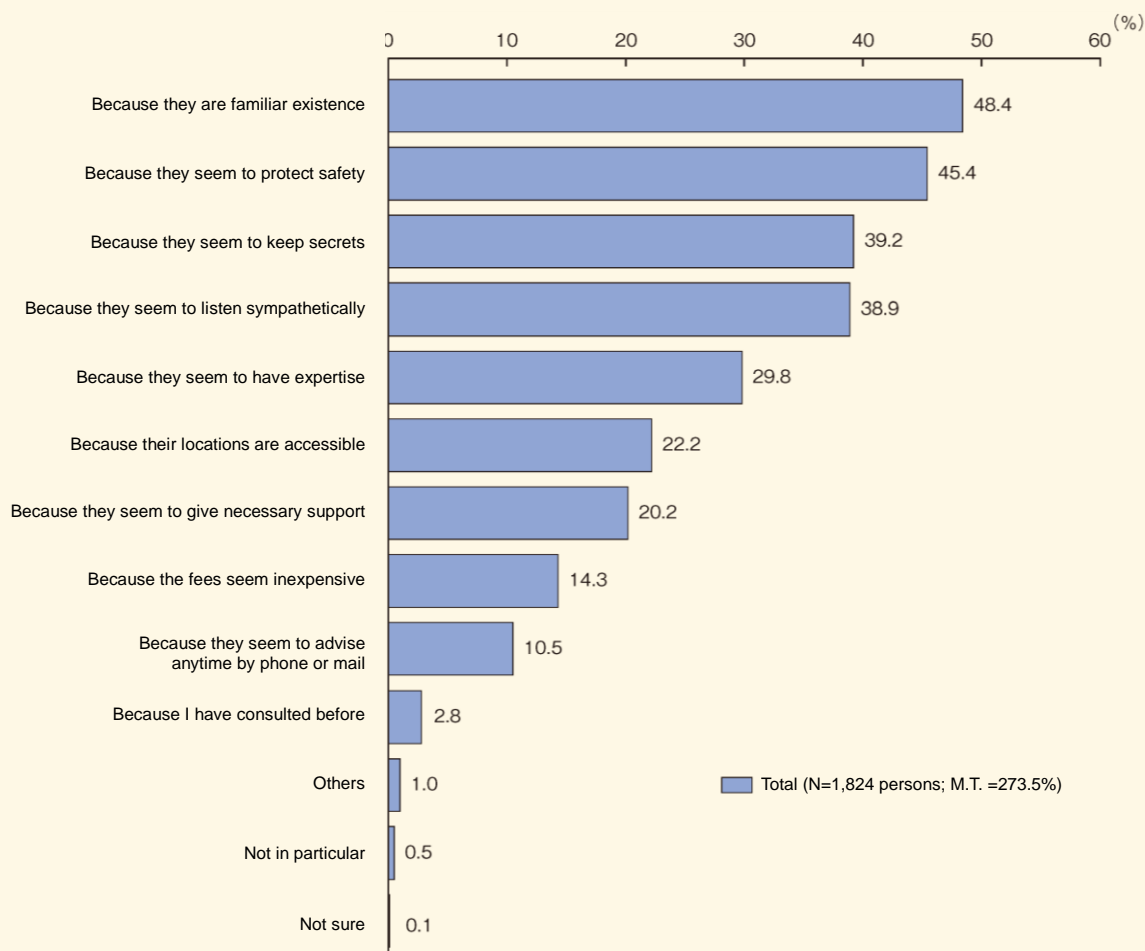
*2 Consult private experts/institutions (lawyers/Bar Association, counselor/counseling institutions, private shelters, etc.)

*3 Consult medical personnel (doctors/nurses, etc.)

*4 Consult school personnel (teachers, school nurses, school counselors, etc.)

Reasons for choice (multiple answers)

(The persons who answered would tell or consult someone if they suffer from a crime that tends to be hidden (multiple answers))



The results reveal that people tend to choose familiar and reliable advisors. Based on such people's behavior, it is necessary to make a consultation environment more reliable and to do PR broadly to raise people's awareness of consultation bodies in the future. In light of the results and based on the Third Basic Plan, the National Police Agency intends to continuously promote policies for crime victims, etc. in cooperation with relevant government ministries.

- Research and studies regarding measures to prevent child abuse**

[Policy No. 214]

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has been conducting research and study to prevent child abuse. In 2016, it carried out projects on "Support by public health nurses in child abuse border line cases – development of skills to help neglected children –" and "Study of how to support sexually abused children and their parents."

3 Aid for Private Entities (related to Article 22 of the Basic Act)

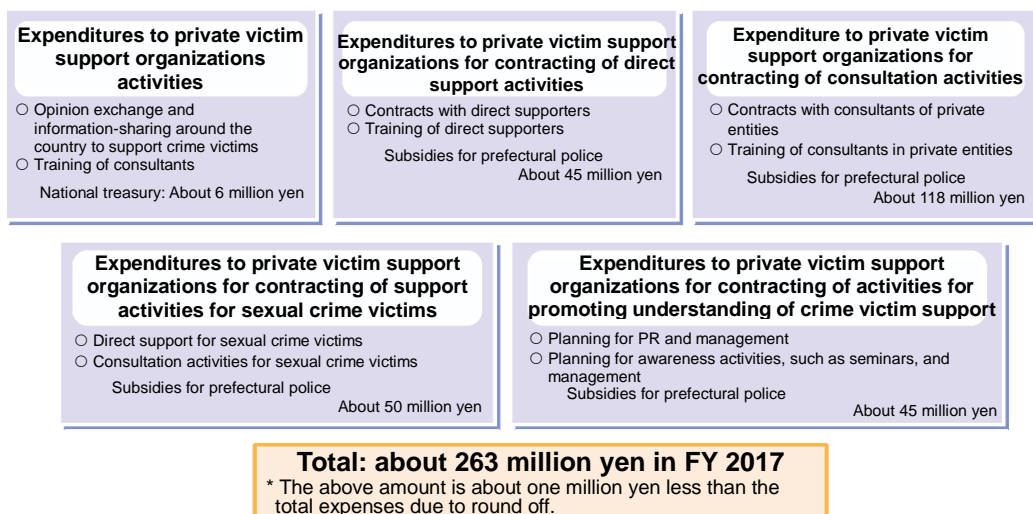
- Major efforts**

- Enhancement on the assistance to the private entities**

[Policy No. 224]

The police have been assisting private support groups for crime victims, etc. by dispatching lecturers to their seminars and subsidizing the rents of places. Besides, the police have been allocating a budget for financial assistance to such covering the expenses required for activity support and the costs of direct support; consultations; sexual crime victim support; and outsource of service to enhance understanding of victim support.

Financial assistance by the government for private victim support organizations



Private victim support organizations

Strengthening of cooperation and collaboration between the police and private entities

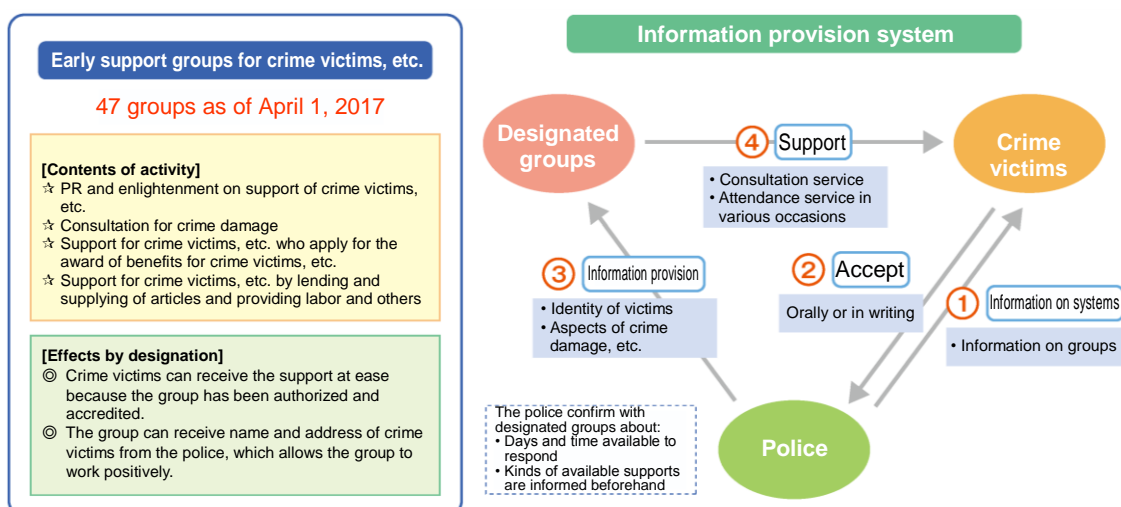
[Policy No. 230]

The police have been helping the management and activity of the National Network for Victim Support and its members, the private victim support organizations (as of April 2017, there

are 48 groups across the country), by giving necessary assistance and advice and exchanging opinions on how to support crime victims together with relevant institutions. Especially, the police provide the private victim support organizations designated as early support groups with victims' names and aspects of damage upon getting their consent.

Early support groups for crime victims, etc.

The early support groups for crime victims, etc. are non-profit corporations (e.g., prefectural victim support centers). They have been recognized and designated upon request, by the prefectural public safety commission that they can perform service activity, according to the spirit of Article 23 of the Crime Victim Support Act, for crime victims, etc. properly and reliably to ensure their early recovery to lead a quiet life.



Column 6

▶ Future Vision of National Network for Victim Support

National Network for Victim Support (NNVS) consists of 48 support centers around the country, where volunteer counselors have been assisting crime victims, etc.

In FY 2015, such centers in all prefectures were designated as early support groups for crime victims, etc., and organized to respond to victims' consultation "everywhere across the country." Besides they intend to improve the system to be able to respond "anytime."

Because most centers work only during the daytime on weekdays, crime victims cannot access early in the morning, at night and holidays, though their hardship and anxiety may possibly persist.

Therefore, NNVS intends to strengthen the system in cooperation with each center so that potential victims can access for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, specifically by securing and training advisors along with metropolitan crime victim support centers, and by establishing "the dial support center for crime victims," with the nationwide same number where advisors can respond to consultations in the case where each support center cannot respond at night and holidays.

In light of changes in society and in response to the expectation of private support groups, NNVS has formulated "A three-year plan for the 3rd phase" (from FY 2016 to 2018) for various support policies as follows, including establishing "the dial support center for crime victims."

1. Improving the quality of support activity
2. Raising motivations of counselors and office staffs
3. Enhancing the organizational structure
4. Beefing up PR
5. Continuous management and enhancement of emergency support aid for victims

For the next three years from FY 2016, NNVS will aim to realize the goal, "Crime victims can get necessary support anytime and anywhere in the country" by cooperating closely with nationwide support centers.

In November 2016, NNVS was certified as a public interest corporation, so it will further enhance support activity for crime victims, etc.