

Citizens Advice Witness Service



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QUIET PLEASE
COURT IN SESSION
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What we'll cover today

- Who are the Witness Service
- The support we provide
- How we can work in partnership
- How we get referrals

Who are the Witness Service?

Citizens Advice Witness Service provides free, independent practical and emotional support for witnesses attending trials and hearings in every criminal court in England and Wales.

We're funded by a grant from the Ministry of Justice.

Our 300 staff and 2,500 volunteers supported 51,000 witnesses in 2020/21.

How we work

We're a national service that operates at a local level, with staff and volunteer teams in every Crown and magistrates court in England and Wales.

We're proud of our **consistent national service delivery**. This is driven by:

- our 'single point of referral' system, backed up by our national Referral Hub
- our stringent national performance quality framework

What do witnesses think of our support?



96%

were **very satisfied or satisfied** with their support from us



99%

said that volunteers and staff **treated them fairly and respectfully**



98%

who attended court said they felt **welcomed and supported**



96%

said volunteers and staff **helped them feel safe**



93%

said **all or most of their needs were met** by the Witness Service

Who do we support?

Our trained volunteers and staff support:

- Prosecution witnesses
- Defence witnesses
- Victims of crime
- Vulnerable and intimidated witnesses
- People bereaved by homicide



What support do we provide?



Support on trial day

Meet and greet, answering questions about the court process, providing emotional support and advocating for their needs

We can provide more comprehensive pre-trial support if a witness is referred in advance

Pre-trial support



Pre-trial visit

Showing witnesses around the court before the day of trial, explaining who they will see, what will happen and addressing any concerns



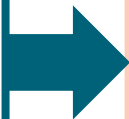
Enhanced/ Outreach support

Enhanced support for **vulnerable or intimidated witnesses**, including preparation sessions, pre-trial visits and post-trial support



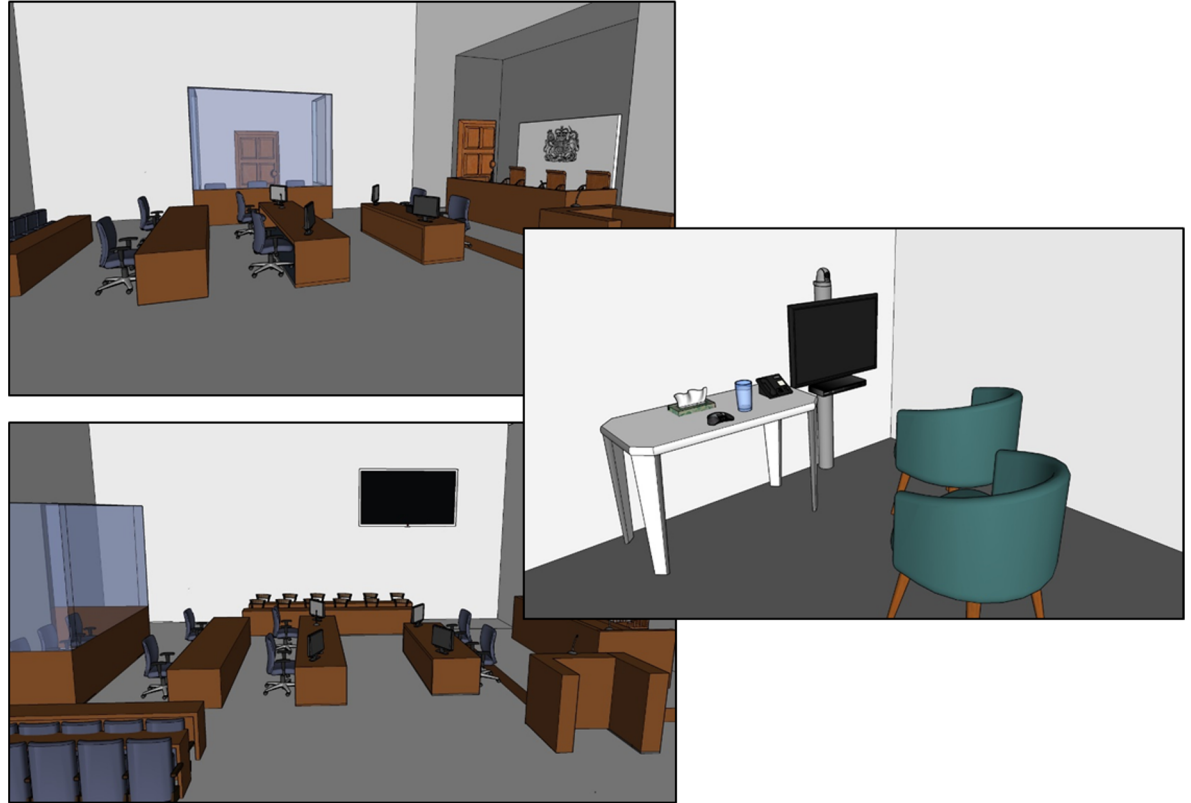
Enhanced/ Outreach support

Enhanced support for **vulnerable or intimidated witnesses**, including preparation sessions, pre-trial visits and post-trial support



- Preparation sessions delivered at home or local venue by a specially trained volunteer
- Preparation methods tailored to the communication needs of the witness
- The same volunteer delivers pre-trial visits and on the trial day support
- Post trial support by the same volunteer to make sense of their experience, answer questions and make onward referrals where needed
- Support for parents or carers

Preparation tools



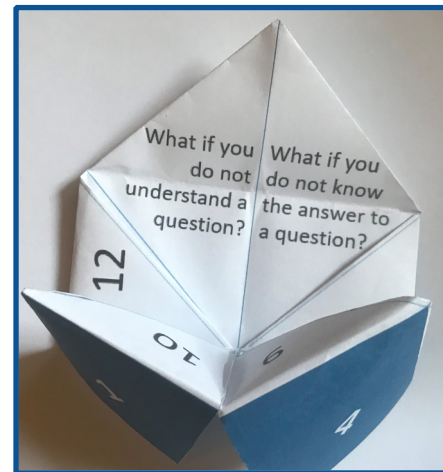
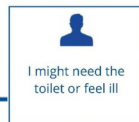
How are
you
feeling?



Big worries



Small worries



Working in partnership with intermediaries

- Who is responsible for the preparation of witnesses?
- How might we work in partnership at pre-trial visits?
- How might we work in partnership at enhanced / outreach preparation sessions?



How we get referrals?

We take referrals from justice system partners, Witness Care Units, defence lawyers, external agencies, professional supporters and witnesses themselves.

[Online referral form](#)

If you have a query about a witness referral or need to give us additional information, contact the Witness Service Referral Hub on **0300 332 1000**

Let's work in partnership

Build relationships with our local court & enhanced service staff



Let us know if you are involved in supporting a witness



Share information with us about the communication needs of the witness in advance



Discuss with us how we can best work together to support and prepare the witness

For more information about the Witness Service...

Visit the [Citizens Advice website](https://citizensadvice.org.uk) or email
witnessservice@citizensadvice.org.uk

