



ADVICE FOR WITNESSES

With your help, offenders can be brought to justice. Being a victim of, or witness to, crime is not easy. Attending court can be daunting and seem complicated. Providing a good service to victims and witnesses is a priority for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and is central to all work. That is why it has introduced a new way of working at court to help you. There will now always be someone at court who is specifically responsible for providing you with the support you might need.

Who do I speak to for...?

- Directions to the safe waiting area.
- Information about the court building, eg where to get refreshments.
- Information about the court process and who does what.
- Information about taking the oath.
- Someone to sit in the courtroom with me while I give evidence.
- Help with completing my expense form.
- Information about the questioning process in court.
- A copy of my witness statement.
- Information about the cross examination by the defence.
- Information about the defence.
- Information about the case.
- Information about the legal process.



The Witness Service (WS)

Run by Citizens Advice, the Witness Service offers you practical and emotional support at court. When you arrive at court, these volunteers are likely to be some of the first people you see.

They can tell you what you need to know about the court building and what to expect during the day. They will explain that you might be waiting some time and that you must stay in the court building unless you have been given permission to leave.

citizensadvice.org.uk/witness
0300 332 1000



The CPS

A representative will meet you before you give evidence to discuss any particular needs you may have. They will explain that you will be asked questions based on your evidence and that you will probably be cross examined by the defence. They can give practical advice on how to give your evidence and will let you know the general nature of the defence where it is known.

They cannot discuss or suggest any specific questions that you may face or how to answer them. There may be other things they are not allowed to tell you about the case, but they will explain why.

Top tips for giving evidence:

- Look at your witness statement or video testimony before giving evidence, if you provided one.
 - Listen to all questions carefully.
 - Don't be afraid to ask for the question to be repeated or rephrased if you don't understand.
 - Answer all questions truthfully, however difficult they may be.
 - Don't be afraid to say if you don't know or can't remember.
 - Ask for a break if you need one.
 - Don't discuss or show your evidence to other witnesses.
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About the Crown Prosecution Service

The CPS is responsible for prosecuting most cases heard in the criminal courts in England and Wales. It is led by the Director of Public Prosecutions and acts independently on criminal cases investigated by the police and other agencies. The CPS is responsible for deciding the appropriate charge in more serious or complex cases and provides information, assistance and support to victims and witnesses.

If you need this leaflet in an alternative format, for example in large print, or if you have any further questions, please email enquiries@cps.gov.uk