

Witnesses

and best evidence

You can get this leaflet in Braille, in other languages, or on audiotape.

Contact your local CPS Office for details.

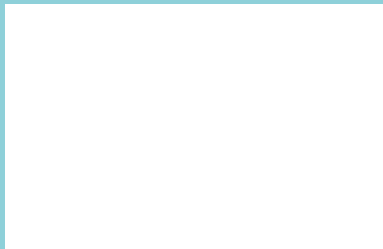
About your meeting with the CPS Prosecutor



CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE

Witnesses

and best evidence



Who will be at the meeting

The purposes of the meeting

Matters that you should be aware of

Witnesses

and best evidence

This leaflet gives you information about the meeting with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) that you have asked for to discuss what special court measures may help you give your best evidence in court.

What are special court measures?

Special court measures help a vulnerable or intimidated witness give their evidence in the best way possible.

Two examples are:

- a screen that prevents the accused person from seeing the witness give evidence; and
- a live TV link so that the witness does not have to give evidence in the courtroom.



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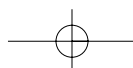


Who will be at the meeting?

As well as you, some other people will be at the meeting. Other people who may be at the meeting are:

- a relative, carer or supporter who you would like to go with you;
- a person who you may need to help you communicate at the meeting, for example, a sign language interpreter;
- the CPS lawyer and CPS caseworker who are responsible for your case;
- the lawyer who will present the prosecution case in court (this may be a CPS lawyer or a prosecution barrister); and
- the police officer in the case.

If you want your own legal representative to go to the meeting, this will usually be allowed. However, you will be responsible for paying your legal representative and making sure they go to the meeting.



We will make the final decision about who will go to the meeting. When we make the decision, we will take account of your needs and views.

We will pay the reasonable expenses and allowances of the people who go to the meeting, in line with the Crown Prosecution Service (Witnesses etc Allowances) Regulations 1988. This will not include any legal representative who you may want to be at the meeting.

What are the purposes of the meeting?

- To develop a link between you and the CPS prosecutor, and reassure you that your needs and wishes will be taken into account.
- To confirm which special court measures will be most appropriate for you to give your evidence at the trial in the best way.
- If the meeting is not at the same time as the visit organised by the Witness Service to get you used to the court, it will explain the court procedure and the roles of the various people at the trial.

The meeting may take place before or after we apply to the court for special measures.

If the meeting takes place **before** the application to the court for special measures is made:

- it will explain the special measures which were identified at an earlier stage of the case by the police and the CPS prosecutor;
- there will be a discussion with you to check that those special measures are still appropriate for an application to be made to the court; and
- it will allow us to get your views about which special measures we should apply for.

The police will usually tell you the outcome of the application to the court.

If the meeting takes place **after** the application to the court for special measures is made:

- it will tell you what special measures the court has ordered for the trial.

If we have decided not to apply for any special measure or measures:

- the meeting will explain the decision; and
- we will take account of any comments or views you, or someone on your behalf, may have. If appropriate, we will reconsider the decision not to apply for any special measure or measures.

We will make the final decision as to whether to apply for any special measures.

You should be aware of the following.

- It will not be possible to talk about your evidence or any other matter relating to the evidence in the case. If you need to discuss your evidence or any other matter relating to the evidence in the case, you will need to do this with the police officer in the case, separately from the meeting with the prosecutor.
- Although a relative, carer or supporter may go to the meeting with you, they may not be allowed to sit with you when you give evidence at the trial.
- We will make a written record of the meeting and, in most cases, send a copy of this to the defence.

The criminal justice system is made up of a number of agencies. They include the following, listed with contact details which may be useful if you want any more information.

Victim Supportline
Phone: 0845 3030900

The Home Office
Public Enquiry Service. Phone: 020 7273 2251
Website: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>

The Lord Chancellor's Department
Phone: 020 7210 8500
Website: <http://www.open.gov.uk/lcd/index.htm>

Court Service
Phone: 020 7210 2269
Website: <http://www.courtservice.gov.uk>

Criminal Justice Joint Planning Unit
Website: <http://www.criminal-justice-system.gov.uk>

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)
Phone: 020 7227 3434
E-mail: acpo@acpo.police.uk

Youth Justice
Website: <http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk>

National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
Phone: 020 7582 6500

The CPS Public Enquiry Point can give you general information about us and advice on who to contact. The unit can't give you legal advice but may be able to offer you practical information.

CPS Public Enquiry Point
Phone: 020 7796 8500
Phone calls may be recorded.
E-mail address for enquiries and comments:
enquiries@cps.gov.uk
You can send complaints to:
complaints@cps.gov.uk

Our Communications Branch offers a range of free publications about us. Please contact your local CPS Area Office or contact the following.

CPS Communications Branch
50 Ludgate Hill, London, EC4M 7EX
Phone: 020 7796 8442

CPS website
<http://www.cps.gov.uk>

For more information about us, our work, our aims and where we fit in the criminal justice system, and for other free leaflets, please contact your local CPS Area Office.