What is the Witness Service?

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The Witness Service helps people feel informed, supported and more confident when giving evidence in court.

We provide **free, independent support** for both prosecution and defence witnesses in every criminal court in England and Wales. We also support bereaved family members and friends, and family members of witnesses who are attending court.

We help witnesses understand what to expect before, during and after a trial, and offer support every step of the way.

Our trained staff and volunteers are here to listen, answer questions and help make the court process feel less daunting, so witnesses can give their best evidence.

Who does the Witness Service support?

The Witness Service supports both prosecution and defence witnesses who are giving evidence in any criminal court in England and Wales.

We can also support you if you're going to court because you're:

- supporting a witness at court (for example if you're a parent, carer or guardian).
- a family member or a friend of a person who has died because of a crime.

We do not support professional witnesses, expert witnesses or interpreters.

What the Witness Service can do

- Help you understand your rights as a witness.
- Give you information about the court process.
- Arrange a pre-trial visit to the court before the day of the trial and show you around. (We can also arrange a virtual pre-trial visit.) We can explain the different people who will be in the courtroom and where they will be, and explain what will happen when you give evidence.
- Meet you in the witness waiting area at the court building on the day of the trial. We can sit with you and answer any questions you have.
- Accompany you into the courtroom or live video link room while you give your evidence, if you want us to and it has been agreed by the judge or magistrate.
- Help you to claim expenses.
- Refer you to support services or specialist organisations if you need further support after the trial has ended.