



Witness Service

'Your Guide to Attending Court'

The Witness Service is a part of Victim Support, the independent national charity that supports thousands of victims, witnesses and their family and friends each year. Witness Service volunteers are working in every court in the country giving practical and emotional help to anyone affected by crime.

BEFORE THE TRIAL

- We can arrange a visit to the court before the day of the trial. You will be given a tour of the court, the court room and our Witness Room.
- We will talk you through the court processes and trial procedures, and answer any questions you may have.
- We will explain the role of each person in the court room to ensure you are familiar with the court room environment before the day of the trial.
- We will show you around the video link room if this is how you will be giving your evidence.
- We will advise you on safe arrival times and entrances for the day of the trial to ensure you arrive at the court stress free and without bumping into the defendant.
- A visit to the court before the day of the trial means that you will feel more prepared, you will know exactly where to go when you arrive at the court and you will know the procedure to expect on the day.
- At your visit, we will aim for you to meet the volunteer who will be at court on the day of the trial so that you have a familiar face to greet you on the day.

ON THE DAY OF THE TRIAL

- We have a designated Witness Room safely tucked away from the main waiting area where our volunteers will look after you on the day of the trial.
- Our volunteers will provide you with emotional support on the day as we understand giving evidence can be an upsetting and stressful experience.
- Our volunteers will liaise with the Crown Prosecution Service to ensure that your statement is available for you to read before you give your evidence. As it can be some time since you made your statement, this is a good opportunity to refresh your memory before going into the court room.
- Our volunteers will liaise with the court staff and the crown prosecution service to provide you with updates on the progress of the case throughout the day.
- Our volunteers can assist you in completing your expense form to send to the crown prosecution service.



AFTER THE TRIAL

- Our volunteers will provide you with the contact details of the Witness Care Unit should you wish to find out the verdict of the case. The Witness Care unit will write to every witness to update them on the outcome of the trial; however we understand that you may wish to speak to your Witness Care Officer as soon as possible. Many witnesses choose to leave the court after they have given their evidence and so are unaware of the outcome on the day.
- We can refer you onto Victim Support if you think you would benefit from further help to deal with your feelings after giving evidence.
- We can also pass your details onto Victim Support if you have been a victim in a case and would like to apply for personal injury compensation with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Agency. Our trained volunteers in the community can help you complete the form in the comfort of your home or our community offices.
- We can also pass your details onto a suitable specialist agency if you feel you need specialist support such as counselling. We have links with many support agencies in the County Durham area so we will always try and find you further help if you feel you need support after the day of the trial.

TRIAL NOTES

A place to keep a note of your trial details

Court:

Date and time of trial:

My arrival time:

My transport to court:

Name of my Witness Care Officer:

Direct telephone number for Witness Care Officer:

Date and time of pre trial visit:



If you would like our support before the day of the trial, please contact us on 0191 375 2167

Our office is open Monday to Friday between 8.30am - 4.30pm. If you phone outside of these hours, please leave a message stating how and when we can contact you.

If you do not require our support before the day of the trial, our volunteers will be there on the day of the trial to support you throughout the trial.

HELPFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Durham Witness Service: 0191 375 2167
Victim Support: 0191 281 0491
Durham Constabulary: 0345 6060 365