

## The Witness Service can help with

- someone to talk to, confidentially, before you go into court
- a visit to the court centre and, where possible, a look round a courtroom before you are called as a witness
- information about what happens in court
- a quiet place for you to wait before and during the hearing
- someone to accompany you into the courtroom for 'moral support' if you want
- practical help, for example with expense forms
- getting specific questions about your case answered
- talking over the case when it has ended and to get more help and information.

Contact the Witness Service at



Our Victim Supportline **0845 30 30 900** gives information and support for anyone affected by crime.

You can contact us using Text Relay by adding 18001 before any of our phone numbers.

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President HRH The Princess Royal

Victim Support, Hallam House,  
56-60 Hallam Street, London, W1W 6JL  
Telephone: 020 7268 0200 Fax: 020 7268 0210  
**[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)**

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## Going to court

Information for  
witnesses and victims

**[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)**

## Going to court?

Going to court as a witness or as the victim of a crime can be a worrying experience, particularly if it is your first time and you don't know what to expect.

Court procedures can be confusing. This leaflet tells you how we can give you information and support to help you find the strength to give evidence.

## The Witness Service

The Witness Service helps witnesses, victims, their families and friends before, during and after a trial. It's run by Victim Support, the national charity for victims and witnesses of crime. It's there to support:

- witnesses who are called to give evidence, including defence witnesses
- victims of crime and their families and friends attending court for any reason
- children as well as adults.

There is a Witness Service in every Crown Court centre and magistrates' court in England and Wales. The service is confidential and free.

Our specially trained volunteers give emotional support and practical information about what goes on in court. The Witness Care Unit (run jointly by the police and crown prosecution service)

should put all witnesses in touch with us before the trial – but you can also get in touch directly if you want to – there are contact details on the back of this leaflet.

## Preparing to come to court

You may find it helpful to bring the following if you have to come to court as a witness:

- a friend or relative to support you – you don't have to attend court alone (you have to let the court know beforehand at the Old Bailey)
- any information you have about the case (for example, the name of the police officer dealing with your case, if you know it)
- the letter asking you to attend court, if you get one
- something to read or do – you may have to wait a long time for the case to be called
- money to cover costs on the day, such as car parking or refreshments.

## Claiming expenses

Witness can claim their expenses after the trial. These expenses can include travel to the court (including pre-paid tickets), essential childcare, or loss of earnings. Ask the Witness Service for more information about claiming expenses.

## Our commitment

We'll do everything we can to help you find the strength to give your evidence in court. But we can't talk to you about your evidence in case it affects the trial.

Victim Support is here to help every community. We take diversity issues very seriously.

We welcome comments and suggestions about our services. And if you have any problems with our service we want to know about it so we can deal with it effectively. There are contact details on the back of this leaflet.

## Further information

There's lots of useful information about being a witness on our website at [www.victimsupport.org.uk/witnesses](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/witnesses). This includes links to other sources of help such as government and court websites.