

Witness Service volunteer: role description

Title:
Witness Service volunteer

Reporting to:
Local Witness Service manager

Overall purpose

Giving free and confidential support and information to help witnesses and their supporters (such as family and friends) to deal with the experience of attending court to give evidence.

Time commitment

We normally expect our Witness Service volunteers to be available for a minimum of 9.00am to 5pm one day a fortnight (weekdays only). We also ask Witness Service volunteers to attend training events and occasional meetings.

Typical tasks include

- Making contact with witnesses and their supporters who have been referred to the Witness Service. Offering them support in line with our charity's policies. This usually takes place in the court building itself.
- Giving support and information to help witnesses and their supporters with the practical and emotional effects of attending court and giving evidence. This can involve:
 - giving information about how the court works
 - showing people around a courtroom ahead of a trial so that they are familiar with the environment (we call this pre-trial visits)
 - listening to and empathising with the concerns and anxieties that witnesses have

- helping witnesses to prepare for possible verdicts and sentences in their case
- going into court with witnesses if requested, sitting in the public gallery
- explaining any legal jargon or decisions
- referring witnesses to the local Victim Support office or other agencies as appropriate
- working as part of a team and keeping the local Witness Service manager up-to-date on developments
- liaising with other court staff as required
- attending volunteers' meetings, training events, supervision sessions and an annual review of your work with the Witness Service
- keeping us informed about your availability and giving notice of holidays.

Step into volunteering



Skills and experience we are looking for

No previous experience of this kind of work is necessary. But we do look for people with:

- commitment to take part in our full volunteer core training
- the ability to show a caring, mature and supportive attitude
- the ability to be impartial, confidential and non-judgemental
- willingness to work within Victim Support's policies, procedures and values
- the ability to listen to and communicate with a wide range of people
- the ability to work as part of a managed team.

To become a Witness Service volunteer you will need to take part in an interview and training course. This is followed by a trial period after which successful candidates are confirmed as full Witness Service volunteers.

Training

Victim Support gives full training for our volunteers from the outset. We also provide ongoing training through volunteer workshops and supervision. Further specialist training is available for those with an interest in other, more expert, areas of work.

Expenses

We will refund the expenses you incur from working as a Witness Service volunteer.

Please note that all our volunteers are subject to a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check as a safeguard for the victims and witnesses we help.