



Fact Sheet: Working with a witness intermediary at court

What is a witness intermediary?

A witness intermediary helps people communicate in court. They are someone with expertise in communication. They may be a speech pathologist, psychologist, occupational therapist or other professional. A witness intermediary is neutral and impartial which means they are not on anyone's side. They help everyone involved in court to communicate with you.

Why is a witness intermediary used?

Giving evidence in court can be a stressful experience. The language used by lawyers and the judge may be confusing or unfamiliar. You may be asked to see a witness intermediary to help the court to find the best way for you to give evidence. They will try to make sure you can understand and answer questions in court.

What does a witness intermediary do?

The witness intermediary will meet with you to learn about your style of communication. The witness intermediary won't talk about what happened and why you have to go to court. They will talk to you about your ability to listen, understand, talk and read. They will also look at ways to help you manage stress.

The witness intermediary will then write a report for the judge. The report will recommend ways to make it easier for you to understand and answer questions in court. They may give suggestions on the phrasing of questions and how much time you need to answer. They will also provide advice on how many breaks you will need.

The witness intermediary may also sit next to you while you give evidence. They can let the court know if you are finding something difficult to understand or if you need a break.

How can I get more information about witness intermediaries?

You can contact the intermediary liaison team on 0467 963 243 if you'd like more information.

Intermediary Liaison Team
Department of Justice