

Will I have to go to court?

You will only have to go to court if the defendant:

- denies the charge and pleads 'not guilty';
- or
- pleads guilty but denies an important part of the offence which might affect the type of sentence he or she receives.

If you are asked to go to court, the prosecution and defence lawyers will ask you questions about your evidence. You will be able to read your statement to refresh your memory first but you are not allowed to take the statement in to court with you.

If you have given a statement and are then asked to go to court to give evidence, you must do so. If you are asked to go to court you will be given:

- a court warning slip telling you when and where to go.

What will happen if I don't go to court?

If you have any problems or concerns about going to court, you must let the police know as soon as possible.

If you have to go to court but there is a reason to believe that you will not go voluntarily, the court may order you to attend.

Where will the case be heard?

Most cases are heard by a judge in the Magistrate's Court. Trials for more serious crimes are held in the Royal Court.

Who can help?

There is a free and confidential Witness Service, run by Victim Support, and you can contact them before the trial. The Witness Service's trained volunteers can offer:

- information on what happens at court;
- emotional support and someone to talk to in confidence;
- someone to go into the courtroom with you when you give evidence;
- a visit to the court before the trial and, where possible, a look around a courtroom so you know what to expect;
- And they will advise/update you on the outcome of the case

The Bailiwick of Guernsey Victim and Witness Service does not discuss evidence or give legal advice.

The Bailiwick of Guernsey Victim and Witness service may be contacted on: 01481 713000.

Police Contacts
Officer taking statement:
Investigating Officer:
Crime Reference:

GIVING A WITNESS STATEMENT TO THE POLICE



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



Thank you for coming forward. We value your help.

- The criminal justice system cannot work without witnesses. Witnesses are the most important element in bringing offenders to justice.
- Now you have made a statement, you may be asked to give evidence in court.

Is there anything else I can do?

Yes. It is important to tell the police:

- if you have left anything out of your statement or if it is incorrect;
- if your address or phone number changes (trials can collapse because witnesses cannot be contacted in time); and
- dates when you may not be able to go to court. Please update this information as soon as it changes. This information is needed when the trial date is set.

Will the suspect (the 'defendant') or the defence lawyer be given my address?

No, your address is recorded on the back of your witness statement and the defendant or his or her advocate only receives a copy of the front of the statement. Also, witnesses are not usually asked to give their address out loud in court. The defendant or his or her advocate is normally told the names of any witnesses.

Who will read my statement?

Everyone involved with the case may read your statement (for example the police, the prosecutors, the defence and the judge of the court).

What if someone tries to intimidate me?

It is a criminal offence to intimidate (frighten) a witness or anyone helping the police in an investigation. If you are harassed or threatened in any way before, during or after the trial, you should tell the police immediately.

Will I be told what is happening in the case?

The police are improving procedures to keep victims and witnesses up to date with what is happening, but it is not always possible to do this in every case. Remember you can contact the police at any time if you have any questions or concerns: (tel: 01481 725111).

You will be contacted if you are needed to go to court (but it may be some time after you gave your statement as cases take time to prepare).

Victims of crime are usually told:

- if a suspect is charged;
- about bail and what happens at court; and
- if the case does not proceed for any reason.

But witnesses (who are not victims of the crime) might not be contacted again if:

- the suspect admits the offence and is cautioned or pleads guilty at court;
- there is not enough evidence to prosecute the suspect; or
- no suspect is identified.

Whom may I contact at the Police Station?

Initially you should contact the officer who has taken your statement. He or she should have written his or her name or number in the box on the last page of this leaflet.

As matters progress the investigation might be handed to another officer and there is also a space for his or her details.

The officers may provide you with a Crime Reference number, however this will not be known at the very early stages of the investigation.