

Adults

Criminal Court

Using a Television Link

Using a live television link is one of a number of 'special measures' that can be used to help vulnerable witnesses give their evidence to the court.

As with all special measures, this is only available for vulnerable witnesses and requires a special application to the court for their approval.

If for some reason you feel unable to give your evidence inside the courtroom and feel that it might significantly affect the quality of evidence that you can give, you should tell the lawyer who asked you to be a witness.

They may decide to apply to the court, so that you can give your evidence using a live television link from another room.

This room is normally in the same building as the court, however occasionally it may be in another building.

If you need additional support you may also be allowed to have a "supporter" to sit with you as an additional special measure. They will sit near you in the room whilst you are giving your evidence. You can suggest someone as your supporter and the court will consider this.

You (and your support if you have one) will sit in another room in front of a small camera, microphone and a TV screen. The TV is linked to the courtroom which also has TVs, cameras and microphones. This allows for everyone inside the courtroom to be able to see and hear you give your evidence

You will only be able to see and hear the person who is asking you questions – you won't be able to see anyone else in the courtroom.

The TV's and cameras are controlled by the judge or sheriff. From time to time the sheriff or judge may switch off the camera to discuss procedural matters or points of law - this is perfectly normal.

There may also be gaps in the questions whilst the judge, and lawyers take notes. Again this is nothing to worry about.

However if you think there might be a fault with the equipment - perhaps you can't see or hear properly - please tell the person with you or a court officer straight away.

You should listen carefully to the questions and try to speak clearly so that everyone can hear and understand you.

When talking to the sheriff or judge you should call them My Lord or My Lady or simply sir or madam.

You'll be asked questions to enable you to give all of your evidence

Depending on the case some of the questions may be upsetting - just take your time and tell the truth.

If at any time, you don't understand something, ask the lawyer to explain the question. You should always make sure you understand the question before you answer it. Don't just guess.

Some court proceedings are recorded either in writing or on tape, so it's important that you answer "out loud" - try not to answer by nodding or shaking your head.

Shot of audio tapes being inserted and record being pressed.

We can't tell you how long it will take you to give your evidence, but the court will stop for lunch and if you need an additional break you should ask the judge or sheriff.

Being a witness is very important, the court wants to make sure that you can give your evidence as best you can.