

Children

Children's Hearing Court

Using a TV link

Using a TV link is a 'special measure' that can help some young witnesses to give their evidence.

If you don't want to go into the courtroom beside the sheriff, Children's Reporter, lawyers and the other court staff, you can speak to them on a television set from another room.

The TV Link room may be in the court but arrangements may be able to be made for you to give your evidence using a TV link without going into the a court building

If you want, you can also have an adult to sit with you when you are giving evidence, so that you don't feel alone. The person who is allowed to sit with you is called a support person or a supporter. They will be near you but they cannot help you answer the questions.

You should talk to the children's reporter or the person who asked you to be a witness about who you would like to be your support person.

You (and your supporter if you have one) will sit in the tv room in front of a small camera, microphone and a TV screen.

The TV is linked to the courtroom, so that everyone in the courtroom can see and hear you.

The courtroom also has TVs, cameras and microphones, but 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 and cameras are controlled by the sheriff. Sometimes they will switch off the camera so that the people in the court can talk about the court procedures and rules – don't worry – this is normal.

Sometimes people in the courtroom asking you questions will turn away from the TV camera and talk to each other, or they may write down some of your answers, so don't worry if there are gaps between questions. If you think that the cameras are not working properly you should tell the person with you or one of the court staff.

When you're giving your evidence, people will ask you questions, so that you can tell the court what you know. You should listen carefully to the questions and take your time to answer. It is important that you tell the truth.

Some of the questions might make you feel a bit upset or embarrassed. But the people inside the courtroom hear lots of young people talking about all sorts of things – they understand how you are feeling – take your time and always tell the truth.

Try not to answer by nodding or shaking your head – you have to speak out loud so that everyone in the courtroom can hear you.

The most important job for a witness is to tell the truth. If you don't understand a word or a question don't be afraid – just say “I don't know what that means” or “I don't understand”.

If you're not sure of an answer, don't guess, or make up an answer - it's OK to say “I don't know” or “I can't remember”.

It's hard to tell how long it will take you to tell the court what you know, but, like school, the court will stop for breaks and for lunch, but if you feel tired and would like an extra break you should tell the sheriff or the person with you.

Being a witness is very important. The court can only make a decision with the help of information from witnesses like you.