

Going to Court - A step by step guide to being a witness DVD

Purpose of DVD:

Going to court as a witness or as the victim of a crime can be a worrying experience. For many witnesses the court is an unfamiliar environment and can be quite frightening, particularly for those who have been called to give evidence for the first time and who do not know what to expect. This may be especially so for those whose first language is not English. Or you may just want to know more about the court procedures or the role of various people working at the court.



What does the DVD contain and how does it operate?

The DVD 'Going to Court – A step by step guide to being a witness' is an interactive, multilingual, animated DVD designed especially to help prosecution and defence witnesses understand their role in the court process. It is an easy to follow animation seen through the eyes of a witness. It explains what to expect throughout the court process and follows the journey a witness makes from making a statement right through the criminal court process and after the trial. It has separate routes for prosecution and defence witnesses to follow at their own pace and witnesses can also take a tour of a magistrates', Crown and youth court. There is a frequently asked questions section at the end.

What do other organisations think about the DVD?

The DVD has been developed in conjunction with a number of criminal justice partner agencies including the CPS, Police, Victim Support, Witness Service, Defence Lawyers, The Law Society, Judiciary, who all fully support this initiative:

“Every year the Witness Service helps around 400,000 victims and witnesses in court. People often feel nervous or scared at the prospect of going to court, and our trained volunteers can explain the process and help put them at ease. We are delighted to have been involved in the creation of this new DVD, which will be a useful source of information for witnesses and will complement the work the Witness Service does. For example, the DVD could be shown to witnesses when they come in for a pre-trial court visit.”

Gillian Guy
Chief Executive, Victim Support

"The DVD is an excellent representation of the court experience today and is done in such a professional way that it will answer the vast majority of questions and concerns victims and witnesses might have."

**Pauline Spencer (CPS) and Simon Deacy (Police)
No Witness, No Justice Project Managers**

" Going to court can be a daunting and even frightening experience for victims, witnesses, and indeed defendants. The more information to which people have access, the better, and the DVD presents that information in a clear and helpful way, de-mystifying the process, thereby giving confidence to those facing a court attendance. "

**Helen Cousins
Cousins-Tyrer Solicitors**

" This DVD is an excellent information tool for all witnesses, with a choice of information that takes the witness from the beginning of the process to the end. I thoroughly recommend it to defence solicitors and others as an aid to assisting any witness giving evidence in a trial. "

**John Riley
Criminal Barrister**

What do witnesses think about the DVD?

Witness 1:

The DVD was the only thing that persuaded me to go to court because I thought it was reassuring.

Witness 2:

The DVD made me feel more confident because you knew where you were going...when you don't know where you are going you are more apprehensive

Witness 3:

It's across the board; it's not age specific and it's de-personalised. That's why the animated character is so good.

What languages is it available in?

The multilingual DVD can be viewed in English (with subtitles), Welsh (with subtitles), Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and British Sign Language all on one disc. Additionally, Polish is available online.

How do witnesses get a copy?

Witnesses will either receive a copy of DVD or be informed about the online version from their Witness Care Officer (*if they are a prosecution witness*) or Defence Lawyer (*if they are a defence witness*). Witnesses who do not receive a copy of the DVD and would like a copy can contact their nearest criminal court and ask the Witness Service for a copy.

I want a copy but do not have a DVD player?

For those witnesses who do not have access to a DVD player at home, or elsewhere, you can arrange with the Witness Service at your nearest Crown, Combined or magistrates' court (including youth court) to watch the DVD in the witness waiting room.

How can I view this DVD now, online?

You can also view the film online or download it to watch later, click here

www.direct.gov.uk/goingtocourtvideo

(Please note that you will need Flash Media 8 to view this- you can download Flash media by following the instructions on the above site)

I am a stakeholder how can I order copies for witnesses?

If you are one of the following stakeholders, you can order your free copies of the DVD to distribute to witnesses:

Stakeholders who can order the DVD are:

- **Witness Care Officers**
- **Defence Lawyers**
- **Witness Service Representatives**
- **Court staff**

Order via:

Online order form : [Going to Court DVD Order Form](#)

Email: hmcs@prolog.uk.com

Tel: 0845 603 8482 (local call rate)

Fax: 0845 603 8885

Please quote: GoingtocourtDVD
Minimum order is 1 box (300 copies)

I have feedback that I would like to provide

We would welcome any feedback on the DVD. Your comments are important to us and will help us to evaluate the DVD and make future improvements.

Feedback can be sent to: victim.witnessbranch@hmcourts-service.gsi.gov.uk