

Supporting families through the court process

A guide for police officers, intermediaries and witness supporters

Pace

Parents against
child sexual exploitation

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Introduction

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) has a devastating impact not only on the child who is the victim but on their family as well. Affected parents and carers often find themselves alone, shocked and disorientated by the activities of the perpetrators and its devastating impact on their loved one. The idea that their precious daughter or son is being abused by someone and they have not been able to protect them can be very traumatic.



Pace CEO Gill Gibbons

Parents and families will want the perpetrators arrested and prosecuted. Evidence from successful prosecutions shows parents are key partners with the police in safeguarding the child as they can assist in the provision of intelligence, the collection of evidence and the corroboration of events. Police officers working on child sexual exploitation investigations must seek a positive and respectful relationship with the family of the victim as this will greatly assist in the shared aim of bringing the perpetrators to justice.

The prosecution of the perpetrators will be welcomed by parents but the reality of their child being a witness will bring new anxieties and issues for them. Parents face real challenges in supporting their child who gathers the courage to make complaints and become a witness. In addition, they also need support to be able to go through the criminal justice process and to cope with convictions, acquittals or suspended sentences. Whatever may be the result of the trial, the child and their family will go through a phase of trauma, fear and intimidation. Lack of information, the complexity of the proceedings and media interest can bring additional pressure on parents and they may need extra support and information specific to the trial and its aftermath.

Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (Pace) – formally known as CROP – has been pioneering in working with and alongside affected parents. We know small actions such as suggesting that the family be taken to the court at least twice on familiarisation visits to ensure they know the court lay-out can make all the difference. And we understand why being filmed when providing evidence can be an issue for an exploited child as they can link it to the way perpetrators controlled and threatened them by filming them on mobile phones.

This booklet puts together feedback from parents along with joint learning and case experience of Engage, a multi-agency team tackling child sexual exploitation in Blackburn. We hope our shared knowledge will assist and give insight to police officers, intermediaries and witness supporters who are working with and supporting a child who has been sexually exploited and their family.

Gill Gibbons

Chief Executive Officer
Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (Pace)

Working with a child witness and their family

Supporting families through the court process

Parents and carers should be treated as key partners by police officers investigating child sexual exploitation as they can provide vital intelligence on perpetrators, gather evidence and corroborate accounts given by the child. They are also instrumental in safeguarding the child and providing wrap-around care.

Investigating police officers need to seek a positive relationship with both the child and family and consider, if available, the use of Parent Liaison Officers to assist in this relationship. Most families will be unfamiliar with the court process so fully explaining why decisions are being made and the thinking behind them can contribute to building trust and mutual understanding. Supporting parents also enhances a child's ability to go through the court process as well as reducing the sense of isolation amongst parents and carers.

The fact that supporting and engaging with families is vital in bringing perpetrators to justice can be evidenced through the work of Engage, a multiagency team tackling child sexual exploitation in Blackburn. They incorporated Parent Liaison Officers (from Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation - formerly known as CROP) in 2009 and subsequently the number of perpetrators charged in Blackburn rose from six between 2005/08 to 63 during 2009/10 and the number of investigations rose from one between 2005/08 to 30 in 2009/10.

Working with parents and carers can also enable the collection of other forms of evidence to continue with charges if a child or young person refuses to co-operate. Victimless prosecutions are possible as shown by Operation Ambit in Derbyshire. During the Operation police worked with a victim's carer to collect forensic and other physical evidence that led to a successful prosecution outcome.

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Other forms of evidence to be considered to corroborate a child's testament:

- Evidence in the form of DNA and other forensic material from victim/suspect's person, foetus/baby, victim/suspect's clothing, scene of crime (bedding, walls, carpets), finger prints.
- Evidence from forensic examination of computers, mobile phone interactions.
- Medical evidence of injuries, marks of assault, bite marks, signs of trauma etc.
- Hearsay and third party evidence for example, evidence from members of the public who witnessed a child being driven, dropped off in cars, verbal abuse or violence from a perpetrator, were used to corroborate the child or family member's evidence.
- Evidence from covert and overt surveillance i.e. CCTV footage.
- Evidence from police records, including stop and search records, harbouring or abduction notices served.
- Bad character evidence of the defendant.

Reasons why a child may retract their statement

A child may retract their statements for numerous reasons including:

- Belief that they are to blame.
- Feeling that the police were unsupportive.
- Feeling of not being believed.
- Feeling that the police will do nothing.
- Fear of repercussions prior to the trial and post-trial.
- Sense of love and loyalty to the perpetrator.
- Continued contact with perpetrators

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- Ineffective handling by the officer who interviewed the child.
- Delay in gathering supporting evidence or apprehending the perpetrator.
- Lack of specialist support.

The quality of a child's testimony can also be affected by the alleged offender's or their associates' attempts to intimidate the child. Lack of sufficient evidence to address the intimidation can prove challenging for the police e.g. threatening messages via social networking sites made subtly through other children or siblings.

Dealing with reports of intimidation as separate inquiries by officers who are not part of the operation or court case can allow for a swifter response and avoids the risk of a defence team raising concerns. It will also potentially assist with the engagement of the child witness in the criminal justice process through to its completion.

Victim care strategies

Successful prosecution outcomes in a child sexual exploitation cases can often be attributed to the brave role of children as witnesses. Children will turn up at court to give evidence partly due to their willingness and partly due to the support from victim care teams.

An effective victim care strategy enables a child to become a willing partner in the prosecution through to its completion and can be vital to a successful outcome.

A victim care strategy should be driven by the victim's needs and include details such as:

- Keeping them updated on the dates of the trial.
- Sending them reminders.
- Ensuring they are ready for court.

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- Making sure they are picked up in time for court.
- Ensuring they do not communicate with friends and others involved in the trial.
- Debriefing them at the end of each day at court.
- Reassuring them of their safety.

Managing the expectations of a child witness and family

It is important to keep a child witness and their family informed as to what to expect in terms of timescales, the nature of trials, the court environment, likely outcomes, what those outcomes may mean and where to seek support.

Families should be prepared for the possibility of a large presence of defendants' families and friends in the dock; excessive coughing or noises during a victim's testimony; or display of arrogance on the part of the defendant.

They need to be aware that the police and the court will do everything in their power to make a child as comfortable as possible when giving evidence but even with all special measures in place a child may for example catch accidental sightings of the defendants. Make it clear that the police, court and witness support staff are on hand to support them should this be the case.

Effective communication before, during and after the trial is vital to enable the child witness and their family to cope if the outcome is unsuccessful and to ensure they continue to engage with support services in their journey to recovery.

How to explain the court process to a child witness and their family

During the months of waiting before a trial starts, victims, their families and supporters worry about many things, sometimes including retaliation by the accused or his/her supporters. For many victims and other witnesses, the thought of testifying in front of people is a huge source of worry. Having to be in the court room with the accused is another source of worry.

All child witnesses will have their own experiences with police officers but few will have experienced being a witness or the court process. Most children understand the idea of a promise to tell the truth, both what is meant by a 'promise' and by the 'truth'. Conversely, most children know what a 'lie' is. Children also understand the basic idea behind prison as an unpleasant place people go to when they have committed a crime. Beyond these concepts, children's understanding of the legal system is very poor albeit likely to increase year after year as they get older. The legal system can be difficult to understand even for adults and for children their concepts are often even more abstract and distorted by television.

The legal system vocabulary can also be mystifying with jargon, acronyms and even slang. For example from a child or young person's view a 'case' is a thing in which to carry clothes, 'parties' are places to get presents, 'charge' is what you do to your mobile phone, 'hearing' is something you do with your ears and a 'sentence' is a part of a paragraph. To potentially confuse a child even more in a court you are asked to 'swear' to tell the truth whereas in school you can get into trouble for swearing as this is 'bad' language. Plus unfamiliar words might sound like more familiar words such as 'jury' and 'jewellery'.

Children's court-related worries may seem odd and unexpected to adults, but they reflect their incomplete knowledge about the legal system, wrong ideas they have picked up from television, and perhaps threats made by the accused to secure their silence when the offence was happening. It is important that a child and their family understand in simple terms how a court works and what each person does. This section explains in 'child friendly' language some key roles and concepts.

The Crown Prosecution Service

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is responsible for prosecuting criminal cases investigated by the police in England and Wales. The purpose of a criminal prosecution is to find out if someone has broken the law and appropriately sentence them.

CPS lawyers who are called Crown Prosecutors, apply two key tests when deciding whether a person should be prosecuted:

1. There must be sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction.
2. It must be in the public interest to prosecute.

Following a review of the evidence, the CPS selects the most appropriate charge to reflect the seriousness and extent of what is called 'offending'. The CPS acts on behalf of the public interest, not on behalf of victims or victim's families. It can be important to explain this to parents and families.

Offences could be 'either way offences' or 'indictment only offences'. Indictment only offences can only be tried at Crown courts. Either way offences can be tried either at Crown courts (on indictment) or at Magistrates' courts (summary offences). Crimes such as rape or murder are indictment only offences and can only be tried at Crown courts.

The judge

The judge is the 'boss' of the courtroom and makes sure everybody follows the rules.

The judge wants two things:

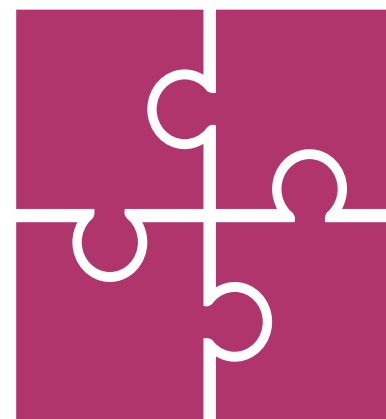
1. For witnesses to show up for court.
2. For witnesses to answer the questions truthfully.

So a witness's job is come to court to tell the judge the truth about what happened. The judge sees them as the 'expert' on what they remember

about what happened. An expert is a person who knows a lot about something. The judge's role is to decide on all matters of the law. The judge will listen to the child testifying and also listen to other witnesses so he or she can have all the important information. A jury decides on matter of fact.

Evidence as a puzzle

Children sometimes overestimate their roles in a court outcome, feeling overly responsible for what happens to the accused. That is why they often react badly when a case results in a not guilty verdict. They may perceive they didn't do a 'good enough job' or that the judge did 'not believe them'.



Using a puzzle as a visual metaphor for explaining their role in the judge's final decision can help. Explain that the judge can only make a full decision about whether somebody has done something wrong if they have all the information from all the witnesses - even the accused if he or she wants to testify. Evidence in court is like pieces of a puzzle. To demonstrate, take a picture or sheet of paper and rip it into six or eight pieces. Lay out the pieces one by one. The police contribute one piece and the other witnesses give other pieces. The child is responsible only for one piece of the entire puzzle.

What a jury does

A child may see the jury as part of the 'audience' in the courtroom, people who can ask questions, or people who give the judge advice. A jury can be described as just twelve ordinary people chosen by lawyers (the prosecution barrister and the defence barrister) to work with the judge. They listen to what everybody says and decide if the accused is guilty or not guilty.

The role of the prosecution barrister

The person in court who will lead the prosecution of the defendant is called a Crown Prosecutor and will work for the Crown Prosecution Service. If you know the name of the prosecutor for the case ensure the child knows what it is.

This person's job is to ask questions so that the child can answer and tell what happened. They ask the child questions first. The type of questions they ask are like the things somebody thinks about when writing a short story: who was there, when did that happen, where did happen, what happened and some 'how' did questions. An example of this type of questioning could be: "You told me you saw a movie on Saturday. Who was with you? How did you get there? How long did that take?" Understanding how they will be questioned can make a child feel more at ease.

The role of the defence barrister

The defence barrister is the defendant's adviser. They have a job which is to 'test the truth' and to make sure that the child and all the other witnesses are telling the truth. This is an important job: to make sure innocent people don't get convicted by mistake. Children can understand the idea of being blamed for something they didn't do.

They may not seem as friendly as the prosecutor but it is not because they don't like the child, it is just their job. They will ask the child questions about what happened but they might ask different questions from the prosecution.

A barrister may use a word that the child has never heard before. Explain to the child that if they don't understand the question then they should say to the barrister that they don't understand the question. The barrister will ask it again in a simpler way. Inform the child never to answer a question that they don't understand.

The concept of cross-examination

Explain to the child that they tell the judge what happened by answering questions from the barristers. First the prosecution barrister asks questions. Then, the defence barrister asks questions. This is called cross-examination. Research shows that children often confused 'cross-examination' with medical examinations or even forensic examinations they see on television.

Tell the child that by asking some of the same questions as the prosecutor, the defence barrister wants to see if the child says the same thing. But the defence barrister can also ask different types of questions, called leading questions. Those questions might start out like this: 'I suggest that...' or 'couldn't it be that this is what really happened...' or 'would you agree with me that...' or 'could that maybe have been a dream' or 'didn't they say before that...?'. Explain that the most important thing is to listen very carefully to the questions and only answer it if they understand it.

Explain the concept of an oath or affirmation

Taking an oath is making a promise to God with your hand on a religious book to tell the truth. Let the child know that if they do not believe in God, they can make an affirmation which is a promise to tell the truth.

The concept of a victim impact statement (VIS)

A victim impact statement (VIS) is a way for the child to tell the judge how what happened affected them and how it made them feel. When someone writes a VIS the prosecutor gets a copy of it and the judge gets a copy. The Crown Prosecution Service must give a copy to the defence lawyer so that means that the accused can read what has been written.

The concept of 'being sure' or 'beyond reasonable doubt'

This is a tricky concept to explain but it is important to try. Otherwise, a child tends to see an acquittal as a matter of not being believed. For a jury to find an accused 'guilty', they must 'be sure' the accused is 'guilty'. Believing that they probably did it, is not enough.

The outcomes: guilty and not guilty

Once all the evidence from all the witnesses has been said aloud in court, the jury has all the pieces of the puzzle and makes a decision whether the accused is 'guilty' or 'not guilty'.

Explain to the children:

- A 'guilty' verdict means that the jury is sure that the accused did something wrong and will be sentence by the court.
- When an accused is found 'not guilty' it could be the jury was not sure of the defendant's guilt, what happened, or a piece of the jigsaw was missing; it does not mean that people didn't believe the child.

- A not guilty verdict can often be seen by the child as a very negative outcome. It is important, therefore, to prepare the victim for such an outcome, and to always explain this outcome in a more positive manner. For example, that the child told the judge and jury what happened and they were brave. Lots of people believed them but the evidence was not strong enough to reach the high level of proof required by the court.

The emphasis here is to make sure the child is prepared for both outcomes and that either remains a positive experience.

Anxieties a child or teenager may feel as a witness

There are ten key anxieties a child or teenage witness of child sexual exploitation may feel.

1. Children may worry about seeing the accused again

This appears to be the most common and the most intense court-related worry among children. By the time of a preliminary hearing or trial, it may have been many months since the child last saw the accused. Seeing the accused again may trigger a stress reaction in some children, including during an unexpected encounter inside, or while entering, the court building. Efforts to shield a child from the accused, including screens or video link, are premised on the knowledge that some children find it so stressful that they may not be able to testify at all. It is best not to ask the child specifically if they are worried about seeing the accused. Instead ask if there is anyone they are worried about seeing in court. A discussion on this issue will help you decide what extra support the child may require and also alleviate any concern based on events that would not happen.

2. Children may worry about not being believed

Research on children's reactions to sexual abuse shows that fear of disbelief is a major impediment to disclosure. Children can assume that the word of an adult will always be taken over the word of a child. Some abusers are well regarded in the community or members of trustworthy professions and are the people children are taught to see as 'honest' and 'reliable'. With child sexual exploitation the child has been groomed to the extent that they believe many distorted perspectives about the power the perpetrator holds or how people will perceive the relationship they had. Research on children's predictions about court outcomes shows fear or disbelief is the most relevant for many prospective child witnesses; and, if a 'not guilty' plea is entered then the accused has apparently 'denied' the child's version of events. Worries about disbelief are entwined with worries about the accused lying and being believed. A child's needs to be reassured it is not their job to convince the judge that they are telling the truth. Their job is to tell the truth.

3. Children may worry about people finding out about the offence

A courtroom is a public place and few witnesses relish the public exposure that testifying entails. Children are no different. People have a generally negative view of court as a place where bad people have to go and somewhere you want to avoid. A sense of stigma can attach even to victims of crime. One advantage of testifying via video link is to minimise this feeling (although children should be made aware that spectators in court can see them). An Exclusion Order can also respond to this issue if requested by the prosecution and agreed to by the judge. You can almost always assure a child witness that their name will not be printed in the newspaper or aired on the radio due to bans on the media doing this due to either the child's age or with the offence being of a sexual nature.

Complete anonymity is not always possible as a friend may be a witness or people within the community or schools may be aware of what has happened. So emphasise that the child has nothing to be ashamed of.

4. Children may worry about getting yelled at, getting into trouble or being hurt

Watch 'Judge Judy' on American television and you will not be surprised that children worry they will be yelled at in court. Inform children that British judges do not shout at witnesses. Children may perceive the defence barrister as 'mean' so ensure you explain the defence role. A child testifying in a courtroom may think the accused can jump up and yell, or run up to, hit or grab them. Courts have a range of protective features, such as security-controlled entry, security staff in all courtrooms, separate waiting rooms and the use of video link to give evidence. Point these out during a pre-court visit and again as needed so the child feels safe.

It may never occur to an adult that a child could worry about imprisonment, but this idea is held by some children, especially those who were threatened with 'getting into trouble' if they disclosed. A court case seems like a competition where only one side 'wins'. If an accused can go to prison for 'losing' the case, can a child go to prison if he or she 'loses' by not being believed? Discuss these concerns and make clear that they will not get into any trouble. Again, they are there to just tell the truth.

5. Children may worry about repercussions and retaliation by or against their family

It's normal for witnesses to worry about retaliation for giving evidence. Children are no different, except they might feel more vulnerable than an adult would. If a child was threatened not to disclose, he or she may believe these bad consequences will follow their testimony.

Common threats are to hurt them, hurt somebody they love, or a pet, or that they themselves will go to prison once other adults find out.

Consequences of disclosure are enormous for them and they may feel responsible for the upheaval and distress in their lives and in those of others they care about. Ensure families know of any conditions of pre-trial release designed to protect them (e.g. conditions of non-association) but also ensure they know when, how and where to report violations. Keep them updated of variations made to the conditions, especially the release of an accused from custody.

6. Children may worry about not understanding court procedures

Research shows that children under ten have poor understanding of most legal terms or procedures, complicated by the fact that some terms have other meanings more familiar to them. Try to explain terms and the roles of key people in age-appropriate language. Children might

worry about not knowing where to sit, being alone in the courtroom and generally appearing less than competent. Assure them they will not be alone at any point. As some courtrooms can be grand and imposing, ensure when you conduct pre-court meetings in the courthouse, children become familiar with the layout of the building and what a courtroom looks and sounds like. This will help to make them feel more comfortable with the setting and increase their confidence.

7. Children may worry about getting mixed up or forgetting things

It is normal that a child as can an adult forget things that happened a long time ago, especially small details like what they were wearing or what time it was. A child witness who has forgotten something should be confident to simply say, 'I don't remember.' Witnesses will have an opportunity to review a written or video-recorded police statement. The goal here is to 'refresh' the memory.

Teenagers often prefer to be alone when they watch a video-recorded statement. On the other hand, a young child may have difficulty concentrating on the statement without an adult there to keep them focused. If that is the case, find a supportive adult who is not expected to be a witness to assist.

8. Children may worry about crying or getting upset about testifying

Explain to a child that acting as a witness is a stressful experience, not just for children but for adults too. Testifying can be 'scary' especially when they are asked to talk about things that were very sad or about people who hurt them. It is normal to get upset when you remember sad or scary things. (There is a tissue box near to where witnesses sit if they need to dry their eyes after crying).

9. Children may be afraid or embarrassed to say what happened

The content of a child's testimony may involve something the child is reluctant to say out loud, perhaps because it involves body parts, sexual acts or the need to repeat rude words or bad language somebody said to them.

The most difficult part for child and some teenager witnesses can be talking about 'private' parts of the body and sexual acts. Assure them they won't say anything to shock or surprise a judge. Courts hear about these things every day from other children too.

Depending on their stage of development, a child may or may not know the correct words for some 'private' body parts. Witness supporters cannot teach them words. But, if they already know the words, help them feel more comfortable saying them out loud. Explain, for example, that these are just names for parts of the body that they are just not used to saying every day. For example, they may use the word 'elbow' or 'funny bone', but that bone is also called the 'ulna', which is a word they are probably not used to saying. Encourage children to practise saying the words out loud to themselves when they are alone so that they feel more comfortable saying them.

By using these words in court, it tells the judge exactly what part of the body they are talking about and that helps the judge. If they do not know the correct words, encourage them to use the words they have been taught to use in their family. Let them know that they may be asked if they know any other words for that part of the body, or they may be asked to point to that part of the body.

Sometimes, since the charge was originally laid, a child may have learned the correct words. At court, they may be asked how or where they learned any words not used in their original statement.

10. Children may feel responsible for unwanted court outcomes

In many cases, the best descriptor of how a child feels is 'ambivalence' towards the outcome of the court. They can have mixed feelings about the accused, perhaps wanting to continue a relationship while also hoping for a conviction, but also maybe feeling guilty about the possibility of imprisonment. They may be plagued with guilt over having talked to the police, and feel responsible for negative consequences that have occurred for his or their own family.

Explain to the child this is not their responsibility but that of the accused (if a person breaks the law then they must accept the consequences) and also with decision makers in the legal process such as the judge.

**Things to consider
on a trial day if you
are a support worker
for a child witness
and their family**

Have activities on hand to entertain children

A case may be called first in the morning or be last on the list. Because the wait could be a lengthy one, advise the family to bring diversions and activities to keep children amused, and also favourite snacks and drinks. But also have activities on hand in case they don't bring anything. A child-specific waiting area may have DVDs, drawings and craft materials, playing cards, puzzles and games. Stimulating activities like some video game may be counter-productive. Avoid sugary drinks and snacks for the same reason.

Develop a court support 'team' for the day

Young witnesses benefit from having a group of supporters to wait with them. If younger children in the family are cared for elsewhere, supporters can focus attention on the witness or witnesses. If the family is struggling with child care, source alternative arrangements for them, for example, local children's Sure Start centres. Children like to see that there are people to support them.

Ensure the family can enter the court building safely

Suggest the family arrives early to enter the building in advance of the accused and his or her supporters. If needed, work with the police and witness support service and coordinate meeting the family outside the building. Early arrival also permits a period of time to get settled. Some people pack a lunch to eat in the court building so they don't risk running into the accused at the meal break. Devise strategies to permit adults to exit and re-enter the building, if, for example, they want to smoke.

Ensure the family can wait in safety and comfort

Whether the case is called first or heard late in the day, waiting is always difficult. Waiting in a place near the accused, or his or her supporters, may add to the strain. The possibility for intimidation, real or imagined, is

present. For some witnesses, it is more than they can cope with so they leave or refuse to speak when called.

For all witnesses, it is a distraction that heightens anxiety and challenges their ability to remain calm enough to testify well. Separate waiting areas are available in courts to help negate these feelings. Privacy is the most important attribute of such an area, so don't worry if the room is not decorated in a child-friendly way.

Bring any difficulties to the attention of the officer in charge of the case who led the investigation.

Have someone wait with the family until testimony is needed

People are anxious to hear about evolving developments (e.g. plea discussions) or any indication of when the case will be called. Having periodic updates is appreciated. Witnesses may have last-minute questions they did not think of before and are generally apprehensive and nervous. Children may be especially afraid at the very idea of being left alone. Some families may prefer to wait by themselves, but most people appreciate a person to sit with them and be available to pass along updates and answer questions. This can be a particularly busy time for the Officer in Charge (OIC) so part of your role is to manage the family's expectations around the information the officer can share at that time.

Focus feedback on 'job done' not the case outcome

In providing praise of positive feedback of young witnesses, focus on their efforts rather than the verdict or sentence. Their job is to do their best. They are not responsible for the case outcome.

Supporting families through the court process

Ensure the family can leave court safely

A case rarely concludes immediately after the testimony of a child, so the verdict or other decision typically comes in later in the day, or even on a subsequent day. Some families stay and watch the entire case, but most are anxious to leave the courthouse once the child or children have testified. If they leave before the case concludes, they will probably not run into the accused in the corridor or outside the building.

Inform the family of the next steps

Direct the family to the appropriate contact or information as needed about criminal injury compensation, family court matters, any child protection concerns that may arise from the verdict and information about a victim's right within the judicial system.

Discuss what support they want immediately (they may feel traumatised and need to be directed to immediate support), in the short term and the long term (such as counselling), and offer a debrief of the case etc.

When needed, point them in the right direction by making referrals and have on hand relevant pamphlets and other informational material.

Support witnesses to complete the 'expenses' form for any losses or expenses they have incurred on the day.

Child witness care checklist

Child witness care checklist

- ✓ Act as a strong liaison between the child witness/family and police.
- ✓ Provide emotional support.
- ✓ Educate and give information.
- ✓ Understand the child witness's views, wishes, concerns and any particular vulnerabilities that might affect them during the judicial process (including the child witness's views on testimonial support or other special requirements) and convey these to the police.
- ✓ Agree on the manner and frequency of the provision of information to the child witness and the family.
- ✓ Familiarise the child witness with the court and its procedures, and with the responsibilities of the criminal justice system.
- ✓ Support the child witness through interviews and when attending court hearings.
- ✓ Undertake court preparation and pass on information about the forthcoming trial.
- ✓ Accompany the child witness on pre-trial visits to court.

- ✓ Arrange for the child witness to be supported when their memory is to be refreshed (as when a video statement is viewed). However this must not be undertaken by a 'supporter' who is to accompany the child witness whilst actually giving evidence in court.
- ✓ Accompany the child witness while they give evidence in court or from outside the courtroom (as when using a CCTV link).
- ✓ Liaise with family members and friends of the child witness.
- ✓ Seek provision to enable the child witness to have very regular breaks while giving evidence.
- ✓ Prepare the child witness for potentially long delays and waiting during the trial process which can be exhausting for a child.
- ✓ Liaise with health, legal, educational, social work and other professionals and act as an advocate on behalf of the child witness.
- ✓ Liaise with those offering therapy and counselling prior to a criminal trial. In conjunction with the police, arrange links with experts in any of the child witness's specific vulnerabilities or difficulties e.g. communication problems, learning disabilities, specific cultural or minority ethnic group concerns or religious priorities. Child witness care checklist.

Working in partnership

This guide is produced by the charity Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (Pace).

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