Accessing Special Measures

Victim Support Scotland

Victim Support Scotland offers free, independent and confidential support for victims, witnesses and their families.

If you have Special Measures in place, we will support you during your time here today.



Unsure if you have Special Measures?

If you are not sure if you have been granted Special Measures, you can speak to a court official or the Crown Office on 0300 020 3000 or email enquirypoint@copfs.gov.uk.

If you are classed as Vulnerable, you can use Special Measures when giving evidence in a trial as a prosecution witness. The court automatically treats some victims and witnesses as 'Vulnerable' whereas others may be treated as Vulnerable after consideration.

The criteria for Vulnerable Witnesses are set by the Crown Prosecution Service and Victim Support Scotland does not have control over this.

If you answer yes to one or more of these questions, you may be entitled to Special Measures. If you don't qualify for Special Measures, after your day in court we can still provide you with emotional or practical support.

- **Are you a prosecution witness?**
- **Do you have a mental health condition or learning difficulties?**
- **Are you under 18 years of age?**
- **Are you a victim of domestic abuse, sexual crime, stalking and/ or human trafficking?**
- **Are you at risk of suffering harm due to giving evidence?**
- **Are you experiencing extreme fear or distress due to giving evidence?**

What type of Special Measures exist?

With Special Measures, there are several ways you can be supported to give evidence, both before and during the trial.

- **Supporters** - This is a person you may wish to accompany you when giving evidence. If the judge allows it, Victim Support Scotland is usually the Supporter unless you have requested that someone else accompany you.
- **Screens** - The judge may allow a screen to be put up in the courtroom so you do not have to see the accused. The accused can still see you on a TV screen when you are giving evidence.
- **Live TV link** - You may be able to give live evidence from a separate room in the court building or from a completely separate location outwith the court building. When you are giving evidence, you will be connected to the courtroom using a live TV link.
- **Evidence by Commissioner** - The judge may allow you to give evidence away from the courtroom before the trial takes place. Your evidence will be filmed and the recording played in court at the trial.
- **Closed courts** - You can request that the courtroom is closed so members of the public are not allowed in when you are giving your evidence. The judge will consider this request and make a decision.

Contact the crown office for more information.

Depending on your circumstances and the court you are in, we may be able to help you access the building through a side door or early entry to the court. This would help you to avoid seeing the accused during the trial.

Witnesses often ask for access to a separate waiting room due to exceptional circumstances, such as family dynamics. This can be assessed on the day if the court has capacity to accommodate the request. Victim Support Scotland does not have control over this, but we can support you in your request.



VSS Support Beyond Court

If you don't have special measures, VSS can still support you outside of court.

VSS offers emotional and practical support to anyone that has been affected by crime. Please get in touch and we can explore how to support you.

For more information and support use this QR code to access our website

Helpline 0800 160 1985
www.victimsupport.scot

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