

To see the Inspectorate of Prosecution in Scotland's Joint Thematic Report on the Provision of Services to Witnesses go to www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/ipis/intro

JOINT THEMATIC REPORT ON THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO WITNESSES

RESPONSE OF THE CROWN OFFICE AND PROCURATOR FISCAL SERVICE

Recommendation 1

That an item on the Witness Service forms part of the introductory training of all Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service staff and also part of the Depute's Core Course.

Response

References to the Witness Service are already included in induction training and the Deputes' Core Course. Future courses concerned with victims and/ or witnesses will include a component about the Witness Service. Consideration will also be given to an e-learning module explaining the protocol with the Witness Service and linking it with other training.

Recommendation 2

That all COPFS Area Fiscals and the Witness Service agree to put in place arrangements for the giving of information to the Witness Service for cases other than VIA cases. In particular the giving of witness lists to the Witness Service in summary cases should be routine.

Response

The protocol with the Witness Service will be revised to cover all staff interaction and involvement with the Witness Service. Witness lists will be supplied to the Witness Service through the Sheriff Clerk.

Recommendation 3

That where COPFS staff wish to have personal contact with a victim/ witness at a stage where VIA or the Witness Service would normally be involved that an exchange of information takes place between the parties.

Response

This is covered by the existing protocol.

Recommendation 4

That wherever possible prior to the start of the court that there is an exchange of information between the Fiscal Depute and the Witness Service staff to enable both parties to be as fully briefed as possible.

Response

This will be included in the revised protocol.

Recommendation 5

That the Court Office/ Macer acts as a conduit for the exchange of information between the prosecutor in court and the Witness Service or the witnesses themselves and this should be done on an hourly basis.

Recommendation 6

That the time is ripe for the COPFS and the Scottish Court Service to re-visit the joint statement and update it in line with these developments.

Response to recommendations 5 and 6

We will discuss revision of the Joint Statement with the Scottish Court Service. Any revisals will be backed up by staff guidance.