

Witness Service

January 2011



This fact sheet explains what information and support the Witness Service can offer to residents of Homes for Islington who have been or are suffering incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB). The service is free, confidential and independent of Homes for Islington.

The Witness Service can offer:

- someone to talk to in confidence
- home visits to discuss your options
- arranging childcare, transport and reimbursement of expenses that you may incur if you have been asked to attend court
- a pre-court visit to look at a courtroom and our waiting rooms and the opportunity to ask questions and have court procedures explained
- support for both claimant and defence witnesses
- a quiet and private place to wait before, during and after the court hearing
- someone to accompany you to the courtroom if you have to give evidence
- a chance to talk over the case when it has ended and to find further help and advice
- referrals to other agencies, such as Victim Support, Solace Women's Aid and Housing Aid Centre
- information about court procedures

Help at court

A volunteer from the Witness Service can meet you at court if you wish. They will be able to answer any questions you may have. The volunteer will stay with you throughout the trial. You may have to wait some time, but we will keep you informed of any delays before you give evidence. There are separate waiting rooms for claimant and defence witnesses. You will be provided with a copy of your statement to read before you go into court and you will be able to meet with the lawyer presenting the case.

You may find it helpful to bring:

- a friend or relative - you do not have to come to court on your own
- any information you may have about the case, for example, the names of the Homes for Islington staff member, the Witness Service volunteer and police officer who have been helping with the case and the name of the alleged perpetrator
- something to read or do to occupy you, in case you have to wait some time before your case is called

Visit our website at

www.homesforislington.org.uk



In court

A Witness Service volunteer can accompany you into court when you give evidence if you wish.

You will be called to the witness box where you will be asked to take the oath or affirm if you are not religious. The lawyers will stand up one at a time to ask you questions that you should try to answer.

The judge will be sitting on a raised platform at the front of the court. You should look at the judge while you are in the witness box.

When you have finished your evidence and the judge has given you permission to leave, you may sit in the well of the court to listen to the rest of the case or you may leave.

If you would like to know the outcome of the trial and any sentence that may be given, please advise either the Witness Service or ASB Officer managing your case. Once the outcome is known you will be advised accordingly.

Before court

If you would like to visit a courtroom before your case is heard, please telephone the Witness Service on 020 7506 3224. Courtroom visits can be arranged before 10am or between 1pm and 2pm Mondays to Fridays.

Arriving at court

Please arrive at 9.30am for morning cases or at 1.30pm for afternoon cases. Try to arrive slightly earlier than you need to. If you are going to be late, please contact the Witness Service.

When you arrive please report to the court staff at the security desk. This is generally located where you enter the court building. A member of staff will show you where to wait.

You can help us in the following ways

If English is not your first language and you need an interpreter, please let the Witness Service know at least 48 hours before the hearing, so that one can be arranged for you. The Witness Service can help in many ways including: childcare, reimbursement of out of pocket court expenses, such as lunch and arranging travel for you to and from the court and assistance if you have a disability or any special needs.

Please discuss your requirements with the Witness Service volunteer.

Additional service

The Witness Service also engage with the community to encourage the reporting of anti-social behaviour, providing support and reassurance to any Homes for Islington residents who may be affected by anti-social behaviour.

Useful contacts

Homes for Islington area offices

Holland Walk 020 7527 7480

Lyon Street 020 7527 6880

Old Street 020 7527 6250

Upper Street 020 7527 5300

Witness service

Telephone: 020 7506 3224

Email: MCWS.highburycorner@vslondon.org

Victim Support

Telephone: 020 7700 6014

Email: vs.islington@vslondon.org

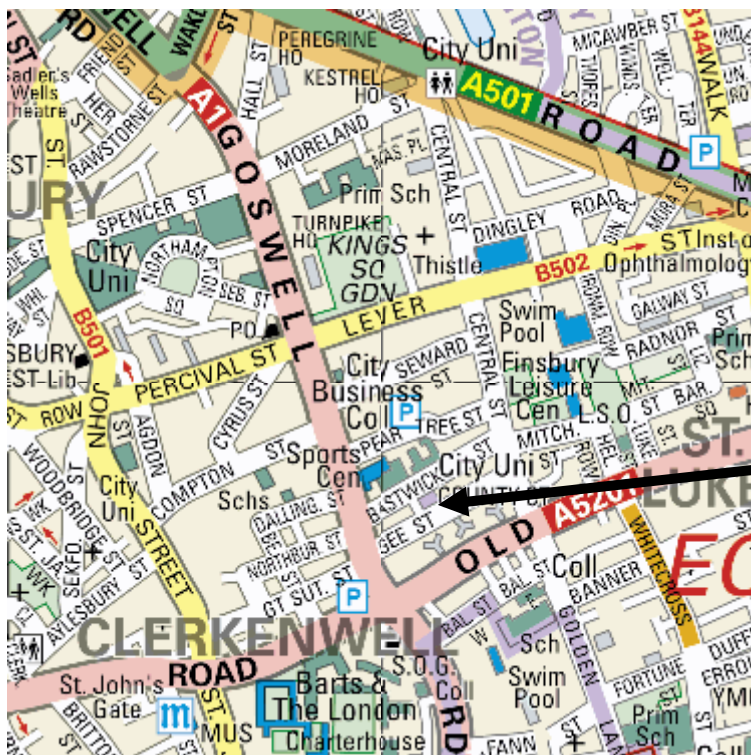
Clerkenwell and Shoreditch County Court

The Gee Street Courthouse

29 - 41 Gee Street

London EC1V 3RE

Telephone: 020 7250 7200



Buses 43, 4, 56 go past Gee St. Old St Tube station is a 5 minute walk.

Visit our website at

www.homesforislington.org.uk

