

What to expect if you are a vulnerable witness under the Programme

- > A visit to the State Courts (accompanied by the VSP), followed by a briefing to familiarise you with the environment and court procedures during the trial.
- > A supportive relationship between you and the VSP, who works on building a rapport with you and/or your parents, guardians or caregivers.
- > The VSP will be a source of information on court procedures and will help you manage the stress which may arise from the court proceedings.
- > Having the support of a VSP sitting behind you in open court or when you give evidence via video-link in a witness room, during the period of the trial. This is only if the Judge allows the VSP to do so upon the application of the prosecutor or defence counsel.
- > Having continued emotional support from the VSP, regardless of the outcome of the case.

What not to expect from the Programme:

- > Evidence pertaining to the trial shall not be discussed between the VSP and you, or your parents, guardians or caregivers.
- > The VSP shall not provide any legal advice. If you require any legal advice, you may wish to visit the Community Justice Centre, located at Level B1 of the State Courts Tower, to speak with a volunteer lawyer.
- > The VSP shall not provide counselling or post-trauma treatment, either before or during the trial. However, where appropriate, CJC or SCS may refer you to the appropriate agencies for counselling or post-trauma treatment, after the trial concludes.

If you are interested, please contact the State Courts Centre for Specialist Services.



STATE COURTS

1 Havelock Square, Level 18, Singapore 059724



Statecourts_centre_for_specialist_services@statecourts.gov.sg



6 JUSTICE (65878423)

Disclaimer: This publication is produced for general information only and is not intended as substitution for legal advice. A lawyer should be consulted should you require legal advice on your case. The State Courts disclaim any and all liabilities arising from and in connection with the contents of this publication.

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WITNESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

- > Who is a Vulnerable Witness?
- > How does the Programme work?
- > What to expect if you are a vulnerable witness under the Programme
- > What not to expect from the Programme



WITNESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

The Witness Support Programme¹ ("the Programme") provides support to vulnerable witnesses in criminal cases who have to give their evidence in Court against their perpetrator(s), namely the accused person(s).

The Programme is conducted by groups of volunteers from the State Courts and Singapore Children's Society (SCS).

The support to the Witness under this Programme is through a Volunteer Support Person (VSP). The VSP is a volunteer recruited by the State Courts and SCS.

The Programme is coordinated and managed by the State Courts and is free of charge.

Who is a Vulnerable Witness?

The Programme provides emotional support to witnesses who are required to give evidence in Court and are:

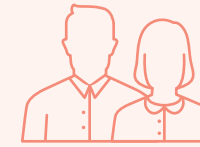
- > Children below 18 years old;
- > Adults who have a mental capacity that is below the age of 18;
- or
- > Vulnerable adult witnesses (e.g. victims or eye-witnesses of violence-related or sexual offences who may be traumatised as a result of the alleged offence, or elderly victims above 65 years old).

¹ The Witness Support Programme supercedes the Vulnerable Witness Support Programme.

How does the Programme work?

Witnesses who are

- > Children below 18 years old or
- > Adults who have a mental capacity that is below the age of 18



Adult Witnesses

Investigating Officer/ Prosecutor/Defence Counsel

will identify suitable cases, download the consent form from www.statecourts.gov.sg and seek the consent of the Witness's parents/guardian/caregiver.



will identify suitable cases and inform the Witness of the Programme.

Investigating Officer/ Prosecutor/Defence Counsel

will email the completed consent form to the State Courts.



Adult Witnesses who wish to participate in the Programme can download the referral form from www.statecourts.gov.sg and fax the completed form to the State Courts.

The **State Courts** will refer the appropriate cases to either SCS or CJC. A suitable VSP will be assigned based on the needs of the Witness.

The **VSP** assigned to the Witness will contact the Witness or his/her parents/guardian/caregiver (where applicable).

The **VSP** will arrange for the Witness to visit the State Courts to familiarise him/her with the environment and brief him/her on the court procedures.