



This witness charter has been agreed between a range of organisations working in partnership in Newham. It sets out minimum standards of service that witnesses can expect from each organisation signed up to this charter, when they are involved in taking civil action through the county court or the magistrates court.

This charter was created because people living and working in Newham are concerned about crime and anti-social behaviour in the borough. We understand our need to protect and work with communities if we are to reduce the level and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. This may involve taking legal action against the perpetrator(s) and presenting evidence in court. Witnesses involved in giving evidence will receive our assistance and full support, as we recognise the vital role they play in helping to ensure a successful outcome and more importantly ensure the community at large are able to live in safety.

We understand that giving evidence in court can be challenging for witnesses and will require specific support and guidance from us. We realise that a witness needs to feel supported from the time they agree to be involved in taking court action. This charter therefore outlines the standards we aim to meet in supporting and guiding witnesses through all the court process stages, from the initial complaint to preparing a case and attending court. We will continue to support witnesses after legal action has been concluded. We understand that the needs of a witness will differ from person to person and we will ensure that the support we provide is tailored to meet an individual's needs.

When you are considering becoming a witness your caseworker will meet with you to discuss this charter in detail, explaining the standards and the commitment it provides you and will be available to answer any questions you may have. This charter should help you feel supported and reassured that your needs will be met.

### REPORTING INCIDENTS

1. We will make it as easy as we can if you need to contact us to report any further incidents of crime or anti-social behaviour. We will do this by giving you details of the council's 24-hour hotline or other number to report an incident.
2. We will take all reports seriously and will assign a named case officer to deal with the case. This person will be your main contact throughout this process.
3. When you contact us, we will ensure that your report is recorded accurately and it will be forwarded quickly to your case officer.

### MAKING A STATEMENT

4. If you are asked to make a statement, we will tell you why and for what purpose the statement will be used. This will include telling you who the information will be shared with, the type of action we are considering and the possible outcomes of any proceedings.
5. We will arrange to take your statement as soon as possible at a time and location convenient to you. We will ensure it is an accurate record and you are comfortable with what it says before you are asked to sign it. We will provide you with a copy of your signed statement.
6. We will consult with you before using your statement in other proceedings.
7. When you make your statement, we will make an assessment of your needs as a witness. We will explore options available to support you and ensure that these are reassessed on a regular basis.

### PROGRESS OF YOUR CASE

8. After you have given your statement, we will update you regularly on the progress of the investigation until its conclusion. We will inform you at key stages in the process of any legal proceedings such as when a notice is served on the alleged perpetrator, when an application for a hearing is made to the court, when papers are due to be served and when a court date has been set.
9. If you need additional support we will seek to provide it. If you are worried about your safety we will discuss with you how we, or other services, can ensure your needs are met.

### PREPARING FOR COURT

10. We will ask you to advise us of any dates you will be unavailable and will liaise with the court to try and avoid such dates.
11. If you would like us to do so, we can liaise with your employers to explain why you require time off work to attend court.
12. Where possible we will give you advance notice of the hearing date and any changes to it and will try to ensure that you only attend court when you are needed to give evidence.
13. We will help you with the practical arrangements for your attendance at court. This can include providing transport and an escort to and from court.
14. We will provide you with information about what happens at court and discuss any concerns you may have.
15. We will give you practical details about the court where you will be giving evidence.
16. We will offer you the opportunity to visit the court building ahead of the trial and give you a full explanation of court procedures.

17. We will liaise with court officials regarding your needs if you have any concerns about your safety in court.
18. Before any hearing, we will ask court officials to provide for any disability or medical condition that you may have.
19. We will make special arrangements at court if you are a child witness or a victim of a sexual offence. We can also make special arrangements if you have communication difficulties or feel intimidated.
20. If you have any language or communication needs, we will organise an interpreter or signer for the hearing.

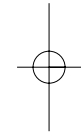
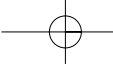
### IN THE COURT BUILDING

21. You may bring someone for support with you to court. We can seek permission for them to stay with you throughout the proceedings.
22. You will receive support at court before and during the trial from your case officer as well as other support agencies.
23. Your case officer will arrange for the lawyer to introduce themselves to you and answer your questions as far as he/she is able.
24. You will be able to use the holy book of your religion to give your oath, or you can choose to 'affirm' that you promise to tell the truth. The court will respect your choice in the witness box.

### AFTER TRIAL

25. After the trial, and where appropriate, we will discuss with you the outcome of the case and any other relevant matters. This may include giving you a copy of the court order.
26. We will inform you of any developments such as an appeal against an order or conviction, or a breach of the order, and keep you updated with progress.
27. Your ongoing support needs will be discussed with you, support from your case officer will continue to be available and referrals to specialist agencies will be made if you need it.
28. Your case officer will discuss with you how to claim out of pocket expenses you may be entitled to, which could include reasonable travel, childcare costs or loss of earnings. Your case officer will assist you in submitting your claim.

We wish to support you in your experience as a witness and want to learn from your experience. We will contact you to see how satisfied you were with the support you received, and whether we were able to meet our commitments set out in this charter. We want to learn from any feedback you give us to help us support other witnesses in future cases. If you wish to make a comment or complaint we will tell you how you may do this.



Monday - Friday  
9.00am - 5.00pm



CDWLG/07/24

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