

Information about Visual Recording in Child Witness Interviews

Throughout Scotland, police forces and social work departments who interview children together now record these interviews on DVD. This provides a better way of recording what a child or young person might say during an interview and replaces writing notes. This makes the process much easier for everyone and also means that the child's reactions are fully recorded too.

The interviewers, who you will meet before the interview starts, can spend more time concentrating on the welfare of the child or young person during the interview.

We always seek the child's views on recording before the interview starts.

Using recording equipment helps to reduce the number of times a child or young person needs to be interviewed by other people. The recording, like any other statement taken by the police, may be shown to:

- **Social workers dealing with the child's case**

A Social Worker is a person who works with children and adults when they need extra help or supervision

- **The procurator fiscal**

A procurator fiscal is someone who stands up in court to prosecute a person charged with a crime. They do the opposite job of a defence lawyer

- **The children's reporter**

A children's reporter is a person who looks after a child's interests and is present at a children's hearing or court hearing where people meet to discuss evidence and concerns about a child

- **The defence lawyer and sometimes the accused (under supervised circumstances) before the trial**

A defence lawyer is someone who represents the accused person in legal matters

- **The solicitor for the relevant persons and/or children in children's hearings court proceedings**

A solicitor is a person who provides expert legal support to people involved in legal actions

- **The child's safeguarder**

A safeguarder is an independent person appointed to look after a child's interests

- **Curator ad litem appointed by the court**

Curator ad litem is someone who represents the interests of the child who may be unable to represent him/herself in the proceedings

- **A judge or sheriff and a jury, in court**

A judge or sheriff decides about any case that comes to court. A jury makes decisions about what should happen once they have heard all the evidence

- **Skilled/Expert witnesses cited by the crown/defence or solicitors on behalf of other parties in other non criminal proceedings**

- **Other family members**

Some of these people may not need to speak to the child again because they have the recording available instead.





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Child Protection Information for Children, Young People and Families

If a child has to go to court to give evidence, the recording could be played as part of the evidence but the child may still have to be questioned/ cross-examined in a criminal trial, though not necessarily in a children's proof or other civil proceeding. Under the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004, some children may be able to use special measures when being cross examined or attending court, including screens or TV links. These may help, if available.

There are very strict rules concerning the safekeeping and copying of recordings. They are kept by the police and only the procurator fiscal, children's reporter, the defence or the court may use them. You will be advised accordingly if this is necessary.

You can speak to the social worker known to the child or young person if you need any further help or information.

Your contact person(s) during this process is:

(1)

(2)

Telephone details:

(1)

(2)

