

The Advocates Gateway

Responding to Communication Needs in the Justice System

The Advocate's Gateway (TAG) provides free access to practical, evidence-based guidance on vulnerable witnesses and defendants.

On the website there are toolkits to provide advocates with general **good practice guidance** when preparing for trial in cases involving a witness or a defendant with communication needs.

Toolkits available

1. Ground rules hearings and the fair treatment of vulnerable people in court
Ground rules hearing checklist.
1a Case management when a witness or defendant is vulnerable
Essential questions checklist
2. General principles from research, policy and guidance: planning to question a vulnerable person or someone with communication needs
3. Planning to question someone with an autism spectrum disorder including Asperger syndrome
4. Planning to question someone with a learning disability
5. Planning to question someone with 'hidden' disabilities: specific language impairment, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and AD(H)D
6. Planning to question a child or young person
7. Additional factors concerning children under 7 (or functioning at a very young age)
8. Effective participation of young defendants
9. Planning to question someone using a remote link

10. Identifying vulnerability in witnesses and parties and making adjustments
11. Planning to question someone who is deaf
12. General principles when questioning witnesses and defendants with mental disorder.
13. Vulnerable witnesses and parties in the family court
14. Using communication aids in the criminal justice system
15. Witnesses and defendants with autism: memory and sensory issues
16. Intermediaries: step by step
17. Vulnerable witnesses and parties in the civil courts
18. Working with traumatised witnesses, defendants and parties

The toolkits also provide:

- Links to source material
- Trial transcript questions, with suggestions about how they might be improved
- Highlighted examples of good practice and poor practice, and
- Lists of references, contributors and reviewers

Download at

<https://www.theadvocatesgateway.org/toolkits>