

oath that the information you will tell the judge is correct.

When you talk to the judge you should call him or her "Sir" or "Ma'am" unless a circuit judge is holding the case and then you should call them "Your Honour". You will be advised what title to use on the day before the case is heard in court.

Stay calm and take your time, think about your answers. Tell the judge what your statement says - what you have seen, heard or suffered.

Where the person we are taking to court challenges the case you will be cross-examined. Our solicitor will talk you through what you are likely to expect.

After the court hearing we will talk the case through with you again and explain the outcome of the hearing.

We can arrange transport home if you would like us to.

If you would like further information or you have a question after reading this information leaflet please speak to your Estate Management Officer or the solicitor acting on our behalf. We realise that this can be a nervous experience and we want to make sure that you are supported throughout the case.

Useful contacts

Victim Support
0845 30 30 900
www.victimsupport.org.uk

The Courts Service
www.courtservice.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)
0207 7939 0000
www.cre.gov.uk

Federation of Estuary Residents
01702 460270

Essex Police
01245 491491

If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please contact us.

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INFORMATION FOR WITNESSES



***Estuary is a housing association with
Charitable Status***

This leaflet provides you with information on what is expected of you if you are asked to be a witness in court.

A witness is someone who has suffered anti-social behaviour or harassment or has seen or heard it happening. It might also be someone who has witnessed another breach in tenancy.

As part of our work to tackle anti-social behaviour and harassment we need your help. For more detailed information on how we deal with anti-social behaviour or harassment please refer to our leaflets "Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour" and "Tackling Harassment".

Evidence

We need evidence to prove that someone is, or has been, guilty of anti-social behaviour or harassment.

This evidence might be provided by a number of people and might include neighbours, police, professional witnesses and housing staff. Often though the most important witnesses that give evidence are those directly experiencing and suffering the nuisance or anti-social behaviour.

Diary sheets

You will have been asked to record the anti-social behaviour or harassment.

There is a leaflet available giving you help – "Completing Diaries".

Statements

When we are compiling a case for court we will need you to provide a 'Witness Statement'. Either a member of our staff or a solicitor employed on our behalf writes this down.

It will include the facts that you have recorded and the effect on your life. You will be seen in person and you will be asked to read your statement through before you are expected to sign it.

Putting the case to court



When we have gathered all the witness statements that we need, we will submit the case to the local court for a hearing date. This is where the judge will consider the evidence of the case.

In most situations, cases are listed for a preliminary hearing and then a full hearing. This is particularly true when the person we are taking to court is challenging what we are saying.

We promise to keep you informed of what is happening with the case whilst we are compiling the evidence and awaiting a court hearing date.

Your Estate Management Officer will be your contact during this time and if you have any questions you should contact them as soon as possible.

If you feel unsafe or need the support of someone other than your Estate Management Officer please talk to us and we may be able to help with other support groups like Victim Support.

We can also talk to you about extra measures that we can provide to help you feel safe.

Court day

We will tell you when the court date has been set for and offer you help in getting to the court. Where you make your own way to court we will pay the cost of your travel.

There will be a member of Estuary staff in court to support you and answer any queries that you may have.

Sometimes there will be a wait before the case is heard. You are welcome to bring a friend with you if you wish. You may also wish to bring a book or newspaper to read. Where there is a wait over the lunch period we will either pay for your lunch or reimburse reasonable expenses.

The judge may decide to accept your statement and not ask you questions, however it is likely that you will be asked to give evidence.

When this happens you will be asked to "swear in". You must give an undertaking on