



Disclosure Ref: 5

Child witness statistics

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request

Request

I am currently writing a report investigating the reliability of children's eye witness testimony in the Justice System and was wondering if you could obtain the statistics for the amount of Child Witnesses that were required to testify in England and Wales Courts in 2015 and 2016?

Response

Please refer to attached table and accompanying caveats which show the number of victims and witnesses identified as a 'Child' who were required to attend a trial related hearing. The data is from January 2015 to September 2016. Data post September is unavailable because the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) publishes its statistics quarterly in arrears as per our policy.

These figures have been extracted from the Witness Management System (WMS), a purpose built electronic system, designed to enable Witness Care Unit staff to identify cases involving children and other vulnerable witnesses, and to assist in ensuring that the right level of information and support is directed towards these cases. WMS is not intended to provide a definitive record of the number of victims and witnesses falling into these categories, and it should be noted that the WMS is not used across all CPS Areas therefore the volumes reported are likely to be understated.

The CPS is not able to confirm whether the victims and witnesses included in the attached table actually gave evidence in court.

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