

What not to expect from the Programme:

- ✦ Evidence pertaining to the trial shall not be discussed between the VSP and you, or your parents, guardians or caregivers.
- ✦ The VSP shall not provide any legal advice. If you require any legal advice, you may wish to visit the Community Justice Centre, located on Level 1 of the State Courts Building, to speak with a volunteer lawyer.
- ✦ The VSP shall not provide counselling or post-trauma treatment, either before or during the trial. However, where appropriate, the State Courts or SCS may refer you to the appropriate agencies for counselling or post-trauma treatment, after the trial concludes.

For enquiries about the Programme, please contact:

Community Court Secretariat

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Disclaimer:

This publication is produced for general information only and is not intended as substitution for legal advice. A lawyer should be consulted should you require legal advice on your case. The State Courts disclaim any and all liabilities arising from and in connection with the contents of this publication.

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criminal
JUSTICE DIVISION



Witness Support Programme

- Who is a Vulnerable Witness?
- How does the Programme work?
- What to expect if you are a vulnerable witness under the Programme
- What not to expect from the Programme

Witness Support Programme

Introduction

The Witness Support Programme¹ (“the Programme”) provides support to vulnerable witnesses in criminal cases who have to give their evidence in Court against their perpetrator(s), namely the accused person(s).

The Programme is conducted by groups of volunteers from the State Courts and Singapore Children’s Society (SCS).

The support to the Witness under this Programme is through a Volunteer Support Person (VSP). The VSP is a volunteer recruited by the State Courts and SCS.

The Programme is coordinated and managed by the State Courts and is free of charge.

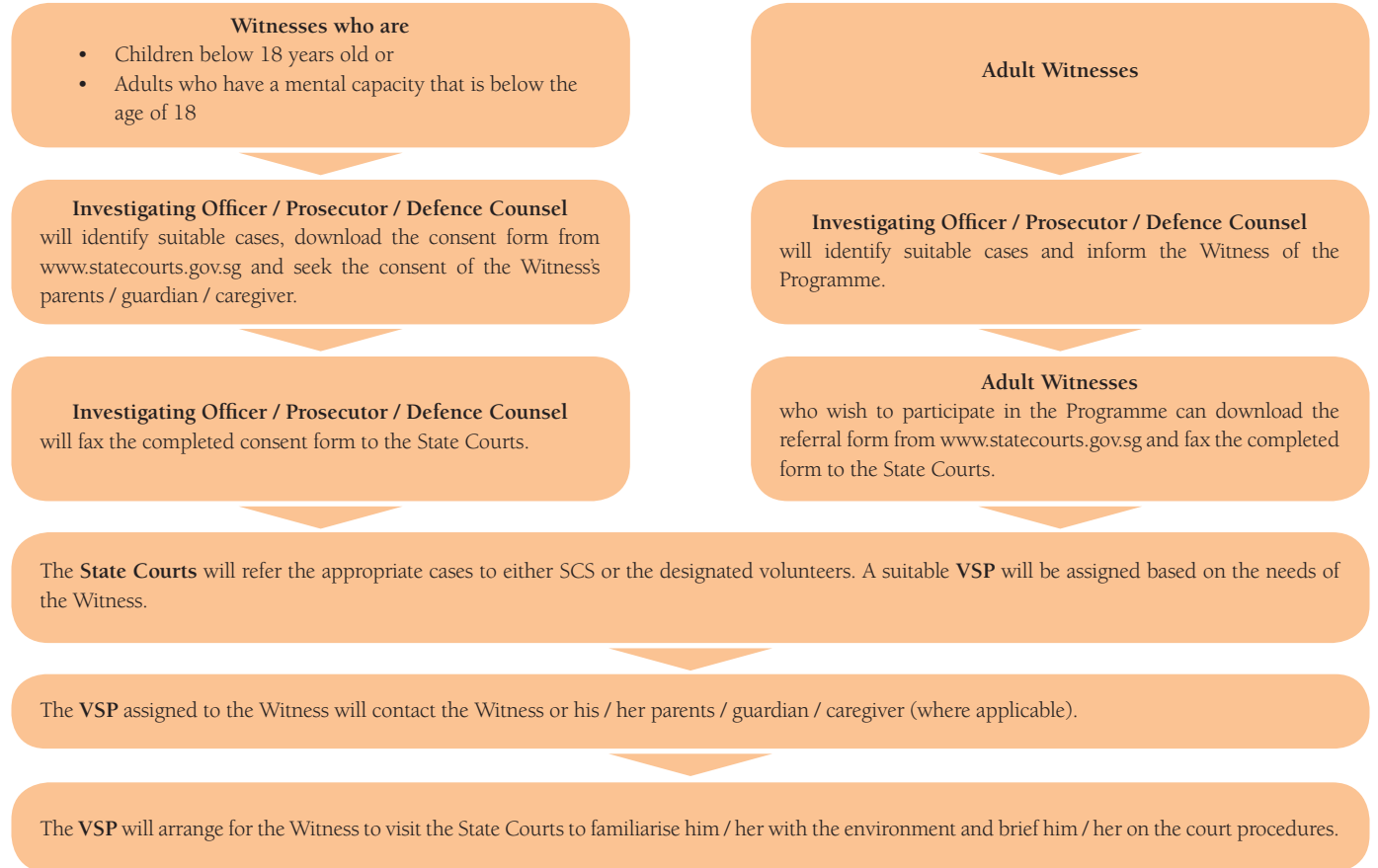
Who is a Vulnerable Witness?

The Programme provides emotional support to witnesses who are required to give evidence in Court and are:

- ✎ Children below 18 years old;
- ✎ Adults who have a mental capacity that is below the age of 18; or
- ✎ Vulnerable adult witnesses (e.g. victims or eye-witnesses of violence-related or sexual offences who may be traumatised as a result of the alleged offence, or elderly victims above 65 years old).

¹ The Witness Support Programme supercedes the Vulnerable Witness Support Programme.

How does the Programme work?



What to expect if you are a vulnerable witness under the Programme:

- ✎ A visit to the State Courts (accompanied by the VSP), followed by a briefing to familiarise you with the environment and court procedures during the trial.
- ✎ A supportive relationship between you and the VSP, who works on building a rapport with you and/or your parents, guardians or caregivers.
- ✎ The VSP will be a source of information on court procedures and will help you manage the stress which may arise from the court proceedings.
- ✎ Having the support of a VSP sitting behind you in open court or when you give evidence via video link in a witness room which is next to the courtroom, during the period of the trial. This is only if the Judge allows the VSP to do so upon the application of the prosecutor or defence counsel.
- ✎ Having continued emotional support from the VSP, regardless of the outcome of the case.