

The Witness Service 2005/2006 statistical report

Referrals to the Witness Service¹

Table one shows the total number of referrals to the Witness Service for the Magistrates' Court (MCWS) and the Crown Court (CCWS) for the last four years.

Table I. Total referrals to the Witness Service and % change over last four years

	Referrals				
	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	% change 2004/2005 – 2005/2006
MCWS	181,102	229,768	258,122	244,145	-5.4%
CCWS	151,086	137,940	129,672	128,087	-1.2
Total	332,188	367,708	387,794	372,232	-4.0

- In 2005/2006, the Witness Service received 372,232 referrals in total.
- The majority of referrals (69%) were from the police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).
- Total referrals to the Witness Service decreased by 4% (15,562 referrals) from 2004/2005. The rate of decrease in the CCWS was lower, at -1.2% than the MCWS, at -5.4%.
- Previous changes in referrals in the MCWS (between 2002/2003 and 2003/2004) are attributable to 2003/2004 being the second year of full rollout of the service.

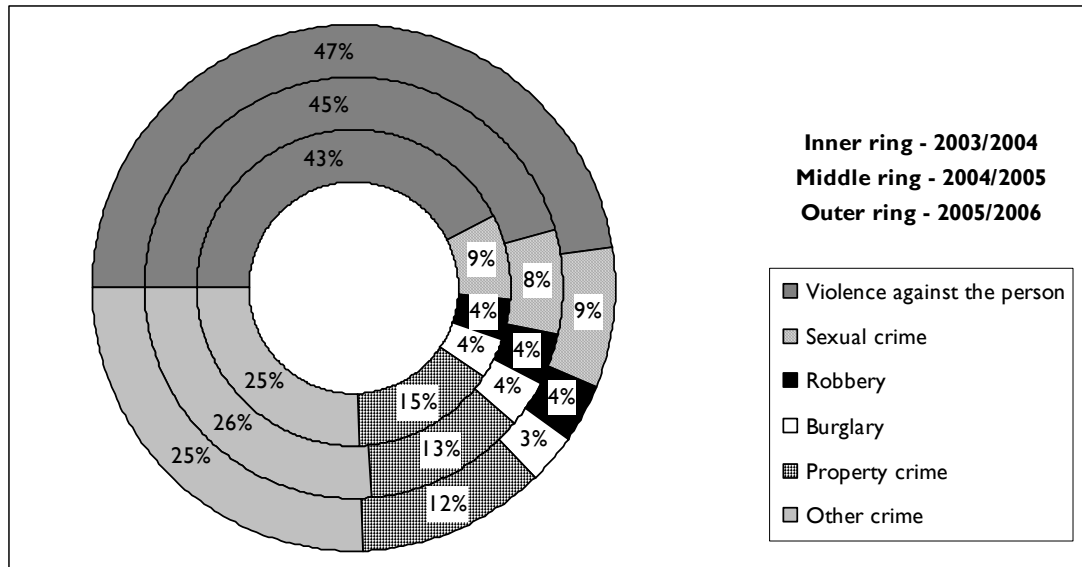
The Witness Service receives referrals before the trial date and on the day. During 2005/2006:

- 68% of referrals were received before the day of the trial, the same as in 2004/2005.
- 93% of people referred before the day of the trial were referred by the police or CPS.
- 64% of referrals on the day of the trial were by people who referred themselves directly. Of these, 67% were supported during a violent crime trial.

¹ Includes estimates for missing data.

Proportion of Witness Service referrals by crime type

Chart I. Proportion of Witness Service referrals by crime type for the three years 2003/2004 to 2005/2006.



- Similarly to 2004/2005 (57%), in 2005/2006 over half of referrals (60% or 221,821 referrals) were of people attending violent crime trials.

Support

Table 2. Total number of people receiving a pre-trial visit and total other support

	PTV (pre-trial visit)				Other support ²			
	2002 / 2003	2003 / 2004	2004 / 2005	2005 / 2006	2002 / 2003	2003 / 2004	2004 / 2005	2005 / 2006
MCWS	62,192	90,440	108,086	118,037	285,980	351,133	383,338	408,235
CCWS	28,251	54,842	61,569	63,553	111,136	205,279	202,805	212,210
Total	90,443	145,282	169,655	181,590	397,116	556,412	586,143	620,445

- Although the number of referrals declined in 2005/2006, the number of PTV's increased by 7%.
- 62% of PTV's were to people who were supported during a trial for a violent crime.
- Other support provided (including before, during and after the trial) increased by 6%.

² 'Other' includes support before, during and after the trial (does not include pre-trial visits).

Table 3. Percentage of people taking up PTV

	PTV (pre-trial visit)			
	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006
MCWS	34%	39%	42%	48%
CCWS	19%	40%	47%	50%
Total	27%	40%	44%	49%

- The proportion of people referred to the Witness Service who take up the offer of a pre-trial visit continues to increase year on year.

Key information

Table 4. Key Witness Service information

		MCWS		CCWS		Total	
		2004/2005	2005/2006	2004/2005	2005/2006	2004/2005	2005/2006
Person supported as % all people supported ³	Victim (witness)	29%	32.7%	23%	22.6%	27%	29.2%
	Victim (not witness)	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
	Prosecution witness (not victim)	50%	47.2%	54%	52.6%	51%	49.1%
	Family or friend	17%	16.4%	20%	20.6%	18%	17.8%
	Defence witness	2.3%	2.0%	2.4%	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%
	Other ⁴	2%	1.4%	1%	1.6%	2%	1.5%
Vulnerable and intimidated witnesses ⁵	Identified by referral agency	16,479	19,993	9,832	11,144	26,311	31,137
	Identified by WS	15,910	15,418	4,787	5,408	20,697	20,826
	Total	32,389	35,411	14,619	16,552	47,008	51,963
Trials 'flagged' as:	Domestic violence	17,092	23,963	3,292	4,420	20,384	28,383
	Racially motivated	5,667	7,776	1,929	2,460	7,596	10,236

³ Where the status of the person supported was known.

⁴ 'Other' refers to police and professional witnesses.

⁵ Both 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 figures include estimations for missing data.

- The majority (78%) of people supported by the Witness Service were witnesses for the prosecution, 2% of people were witnesses for the defence, and the remaining were friends/family or other⁶.

Demographics of people supported

Table 5. Key demographics⁷

		MCWS 2005/2006	CCWS 2005/2006	Total	
				2004/2005	2005/2006
Gender	Male	54%	53%	55%	54%
	Female	46%	47%	45%	46%
Young people supported	Aged under 14	2%	2%	2%	2%
	Aged 14-17	8%	6%	7%	7%
	Total aged under 18	10%	8%	9%	9%
Ethnicity	White or White British	91%	90%	91%	91%
	Black or minority ethnic	8%	10%	9%	9%

- During 2005/2006, the Witness Service supported 28,959 young people (under 18 years old). This is a 15% increase (3,770 more people) compared to 2004/2005, when 25,189 young people were supported.
- Of the young people supported this year, 22% (6,436) were aged 13 or under.
- Of the people supported, 8,365 considered themselves to have a disability.

⁶ 'Other' includes people such as professional witnesses or police officers.

⁷ Does not include missing data.