



Ministry  
of Justice

# The Witness Intermediary Scheme

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2022**



## **Ministry of Justice**

# **Witness Intermediary Scheme: Annual Report 2022**

(For the year ended 31 December 2022)

Alternative format versions of this report are available on request from [registered.interme@Justice.gov.uk](mailto:registered.interme@Justice.gov.uk).

# Foreword from the Minister of State for Justice, Edward Argar MP



Since its inception as an ambitious pilot project nearly twenty years ago, the Witness Intermediary Scheme (WIS) has evolved into an invaluable service within our criminal justice system. Now widely used throughout England and Wales, the WIS has proved itself a force for good among vulnerable people, police forces and crown prosecutors alike.

We owe much gratitude to the Registered Intermediaries (RIs) who make this scheme possible. For yet another year, their dedication and expertise has been instrumental in assisting vulnerable people in nearly 8,000 cases with giving their best evidence in police interviews and in court.

The year 2022 was characterised by both growth and progress for the WIS, with RIs being provided in more cases than ever before. Their work has helped make a hugely positive impact to the lives of some of our justice system's most vulnerable users. The exceptional feedback that RIs receive from police officers and the CPS is a further testament to the high esteem in which they are held, and all RIs can rightfully be very proud of this.

While growing demand for intermediary services inevitably poses challenges, work is underway to ensure the criminal justice system continues to benefit from access to intermediaries. The registration of new RIs will continue throughout 2023, building on the excellent work undertaken by the WIS training team. We will also be listening to RIs and gathering their insights on how we can continue strengthening the provision of intermediary services across the justice system.

On behalf of the MoJ, I would like to thank all RIs for their work which sustains this important service. Day in, day out, their efforts continue to make a profound difference in giving vulnerable people a voice within our justice system.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Argar', written in a cursive style.

**Edward Argar MP**  
**Minister of State for Justice**

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# Terms and Abbreviations

ABE	Achieving Best Evidence
aRI	Accredited Registered Intermediary
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
End-User	The party that requests the services of a Registered Intermediary, usually the police or CPS
IRB	Intermediaries Registration Board
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NCA	National Crime Agency
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council
NQRI	Newly Qualified Registered Intermediary
QAB	Quality Assurance Board
RfS	Request for Service
RI	Registered Intermediary
RIRT	Registered Intermediary Reference Team
Section 28	Section 28 (s. 28) of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act (YJCEA) 1999 allows eligible witnesses to pre-record their cross-examination or re-examination before the trial.
SLT	Speech and Language Therapy/Therapist
WIS	Witness Intermediary Scheme
WIT	Witness Intermediary Team
YJCEA	Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999

# Introduction: The Witness Intermediary Scheme in 2022

## Background

The Witness Intermediary Scheme (WIS) was first piloted in England and Wales in 2004 to implement the intermediary special measure in the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (YJCEA). The WIS was rolled out nationally in 2008 and established a register of intermediaries recruited and trained by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). These intermediaries became known as Registered Intermediaries (RIs).

An RI is a self-employed communication specialist who helps witnesses and complainants with communication difficulties to give evidence to the police and to the court in criminal trials. Their assistance is often the difference between a witness being able to give evidence or not.

The intermediary role was introduced by section 29 of the YJCEA 1999, which provides for the examination of a witness in criminal proceedings, other than a defendant, to be conducted through an intermediary. Section 16 of the YJCEA stipulates that a witness is eligible for assistance from an intermediary if:

- they are under the age of 18 at the time of the hearing; or
- the court considers that the quality of evidence given by the witness is likely to be diminished by:
  - a mental disorder (within the meaning of the 1983 Mental Health Act<sup>1</sup>); or
  - a significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning; or
  - a physical disability or physical disorder.

This annual report provides an overview of the governance, operation and performance of the WIS from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.

## Summary of 2022

Throughout 2022, the MoJ successfully maintained a high standard of service provision in the face of record demand for RI assistance. Efforts focused on ensuring the continued expansion of WIS capacity through rolling recruitment campaigns, the introduction of a return to practice programme for former RIs, and encouraging the careful application of available resources among service users.

The WIS received a total 8,125 requests for RI assistance in 2022, setting a new record for the highest number of requests received for a fourth consecutive calendar year. This figure constitutes a 574% increase in the number of requests for RIs since 2010, but also marks a fall in the year-on-year growth rate for RI services compared to that recorded in 2021.

Continuing with the recruitment strategy launched in 2021 the MoJ funded five recruitment campaigns and added 31 new RIs to the WIS Register, increasing the scheme headcount

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<sup>1</sup> The 1983 Mental Health Act defines 'mental disorder' as 'any disorder or disability of the mind'.

by around 10% between January and December 2022. Work on increasing scheme capacity will continue throughout 2023 and is expected to enable the scheme to sustain the level of service provision in the face of continued rising demand.

The proportion of successfully matched requests for RI assistance increased by a minor 0.1% since 2021, amounting to 95.4% of all requests received. Feedback from end-users (i.e. the police or the Crown Prosecution Service) remained overwhelmingly positive, with 99.9% of responses recorded as either 'excellent', 'more than satisfactory' or 'satisfactory'.

The MoJ and the National Crime Agency's (NCA) Witness Intermediary Team (WIT) worked to mitigate the impact of pressure resulting from criminal case backlogs by launching a multi-phase WIS recovery plan, aimed at optimising resources within the WIT and encouraging the responsible use of RI services across the criminal justice system. The MoJ also hosted the fourth consecutive WIS annual conference, doubled its funding for the mentoring of newly qualified RIs, and collaborated with RIs throughout the rollout of the Section 28 special measure to all Crown Courts in England and Wales.<sup>2</sup>

For 2023, increasing the availability of RI services across England and Wales remains a priority. The MoJ will also be working closely with RIs, guided by their feedback to strengthen WIS governance and oversight of the scheme.

## Data Sources

All statistics in this report, unless explicitly stated otherwise, are sourced from the WIT and the MoJ Vulnerable Users Policy Team.

## Change to Reporting Periods

WIS annual reports now present data organised according to calendar years, rather than financial years. This change makes service performance data more accessible for our stakeholders, who typically request data in calendar year format.

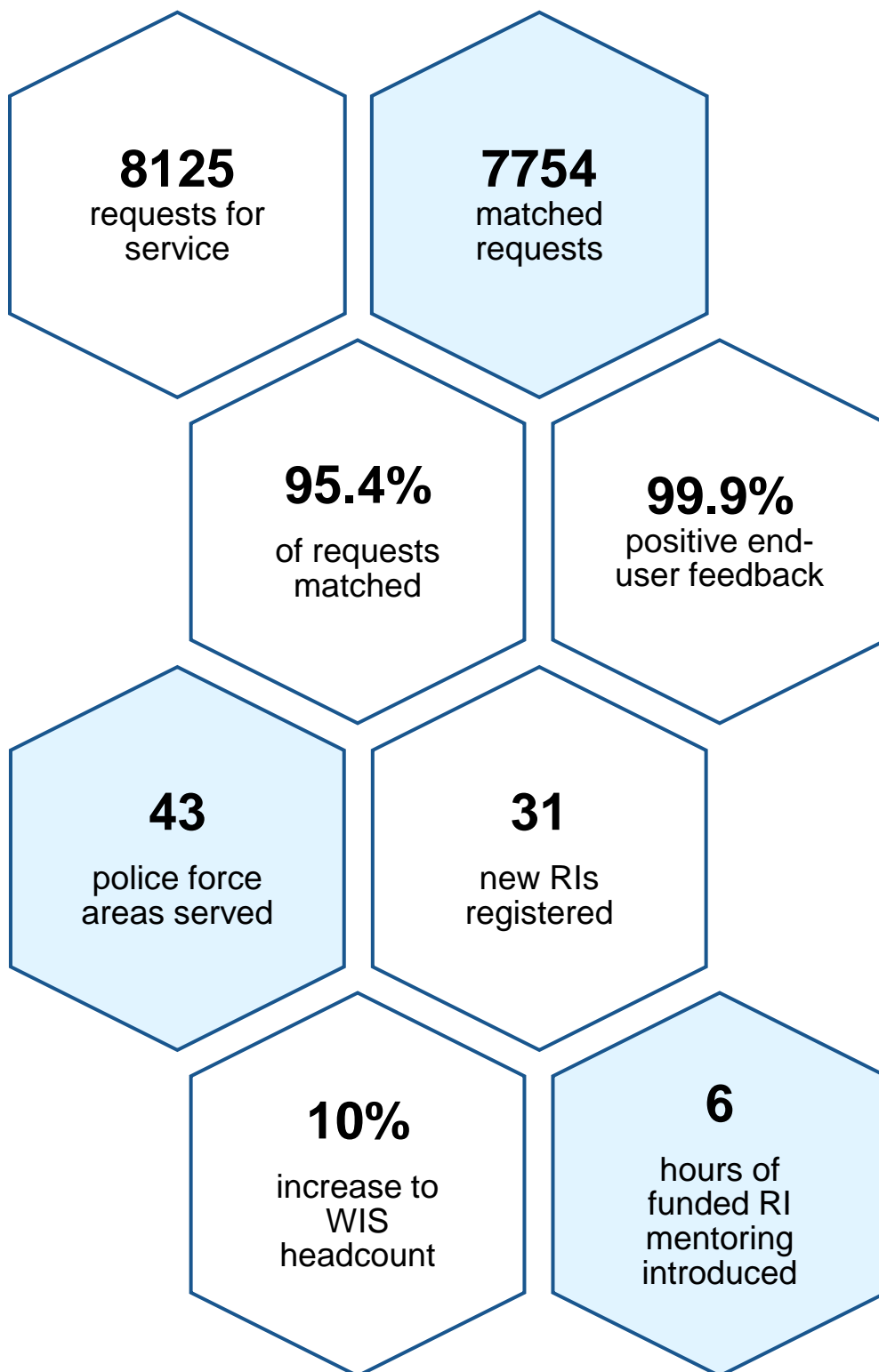
To ensure continuity and to allow for consistent comparisons of performance statistics, performance data corresponding to the 2021 and 2020 calendar years has also been included in this report.

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<sup>2</sup> Where the judge directs, section 28 allows vulnerable victims and witnesses to have their cross-examination video-recorded before the full trial, away from the court room. This evidence is then played during the live trial, which, in most cases, means the vulnerable person does not need to attend in person.



# 2022: The Year in Numbers



# Part One: Overview of the Witness Intermediary Scheme

## Ministry of Justice (Vulnerable Users Policy Team)

The MoJ's Vulnerable Users Policy Team has overall responsibility for the WIS. This includes strategic and policy matters, as well as funding and overseeing its administration, the latter of which is delegated to the National Crime Agency (NCA). Governance is provided via the Quality Assurance Board and Intermediaries Registration Board.

Vulnerable Users Policy sits within the Vulnerabilities and Criminal Law Policy Unit, which is part of the MoJ's Victims, Vulnerability and Criminal Law Directorate.

## National Crime Agency (Witness Intermediary Team)

The NCA's Witness Intermediary Team has provided the operational delivery aspects of the WIS since 2013, including the management of the RI Register and the Matching Service Database and the recruitment and registration of RIs.

The WIT is led by the National Vulnerable Witness Adviser, who regularly deploys to major crime investigations to assist in the development of interview and witness management strategies in cases that involve particularly vulnerable witnesses.

The key operational element of the WIS is the matching service. This is the mechanism by which the WIT matches RIs to the requirements of witnesses at the request of the end-user (e.g. a police force, the CPS, or solicitor). Through the matching service, the WIT collects data pertaining to RI usage, such as the number of requests in each area and the reason(s) for the request (such as type of vulnerability and age of witness). This data is logged on the matching service database and allows for the monitoring of emerging changes and trends in demand for RIs.

## The Intermediaries Registration Board (IRB)

The IRB focuses on the strategic direction, policy management and strategy of the WIS and is the governance body through which WIS policy decisions are agreed.

The Board meets quarterly and brings together key stakeholders from across the criminal justice system, including the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) representing the primary end-users of WIS services, as well as the Law Society, HM Courts and Tribunals Service, Citizens Advice, the NCA, Quality Assurance Board and the Registered Intermediary Reference Team. It is chaired by the MoJ.

Members are responsible for representing their organisations on the board and representing the WIS within their organisations, taking action to raise the WIS' profile or address issues as necessary.

## The Quality Assurance Board (QAB)

The QAB is the body responsible for the quality assurance, regulation and monitoring of the professional standards of RIs working within the WIS. It aims to ensure high-quality, professional intermediary services are available to victims and witnesses with communication needs.

The QAB meets quarterly and is comprised of individuals with professional experience in regulation and quality assurance. It is accountable to the Intermediaries Registration Board (IRB). The QAB's role is to:

- Agree the standards for, and lead on, quality control of recruitment, training, registration and CPD review of RIs.
- Maintain and support the RI register and ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Ensure that Registered Intermediaries are supported to act in accordance with the Code of Practice and the Code of Ethics.
- Ensure that feedback and complaints are reviewed in accordance with the IRB's feedback and complaints policy.
- Monitor and support the development of all aspects of the RI professional role.

The QAB has fourteen members. Seven of these are independent members who lead on specific areas of the QAB's work. An additional seven members are official representatives from the MoJ, NCA, CPS and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT).

<b>QAB: Official Representatives (2022)</b>	
<b>Member</b>	<b>Representing Organisation</b>
<b>Laura Beaumont/Abigail Plenty</b>	Deputy-Director of Vulnerabilities Unit, Ministry of Justice
<b>Amy Palasz</b>	Ministry of Justice
<b>Hannah Kappler</b>	Crown Prosecution Service
<b>Frank Glen</b>	National Crime Agency
<b>Nicola Furlong</b>	National Police Chiefs' Council
<b>Clare Moser</b>	Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

**QAB: Independent Members (2022)**

Member	Profile
<p><b>Professor Karen Bryan</b> Chair of the QAB</p>	<p><b>Professor Karen Bryan</b> is the Vice-Chancellor at York St John University. She was previously Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) at the University of Greenwich. Prior to that, she was Pro Vice-Chancellor for Regional Engagement and Dean of the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing at Sheffield Hallam University, and held academic positions at the University of Surrey and University College London. In addition, Professor Bryan held funded NHS posts until 2013.</p> <p>Professor Bryan qualified as a speech and language therapist from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and also gained her PhD there. Her research interests are in communication difficulties in young offenders and in forensic populations, as well as the impact of communication difficulties on access to healthcare. Professor Bryan was previously a member of the Health Professions Council.</p> <p>Professor Bryan is a Visiting Professor in the Department of Neuropsychology at the University of Warsaw, and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. She was awarded an OBE for services to higher education in 2018.</p>
<p><b>Clare Hickey</b> Recruitment and Training Lead</p>	<p><b>Clare Hickey</b> is a freelance HR Consultant, advising businesses on people strategy, recruitment, training and development, and providing solution focused coaching.</p> <p>Clare combines consultancy work with sitting as Magistrate in South Essex. She is also part of the 'Magistrates in the Community' team, visiting schools to deliver workshops on the judiciary and to raise awareness of issues concerning knife crime, cyber bullying and County Lines.</p>
<p><b>Alison Peasgood</b> General Consultant</p>	<p><b>Alison Peasgood</b> is a Specialist Speech and Language Therapist with substantial experience of working with deaf patients and patients with head, neck and voice disorders in hospital and health centre settings.</p> <p>In 1994 Alison joined the first Adult Cochlear Implant Team at the Middlesex Hospital in London. In 1997, the Team moved to the Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital, where Alison was instrumental in setting up the Hospital's Paediatric Implant Programme.</p> <p>Subsequently, Alison worked as a Specialist Clinical Advisor (on deafness) to the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists between 2002 and 2012. Alison has also taken part in training medical students on their ENT rotations, as well as nurses and undergraduate speech and language therapists.</p>

<p><b>John Postlethwaite</b> Negative Feedback, Complaints and Sanctions Lead</p>	<p><b>John Postlethwaite</b> has more than 25 years' experience of working with children, families and communities in local authority, third sector and health settings. A large proportion of this time has been at a senior leadership level.</p> <p>In this capacity, John has successfully delivered change and improvement in a variety of complex health and social care settings. Most recently he developed and led a programme for the MoJ regarding adult offenders with a hidden learning disability, introducing changes adopted by prisons and community services across England and Wales.</p>
<p><b>Benjamin Roe</b> CPD and RI Register Lead</p>	<p><b>Ben Roe</b> is the Lead Knowledge Lawyer for the global disputes and compliance group of a leading international law firm. He has responsibility for the know-how, professional development and training needs of approximately 1400 litigation, arbitration and compliance lawyers across 77 offices.</p> <p>Ben is an experienced litigation solicitor, and prior to his current role worked in private practice in London. He has managed a number of high-profile cases, often involving cross-border issues. He is well-practised at preparing witnesses for trial and supporting individuals through an often unfamiliar process.</p> <p>Ben holds higher rights of audience and is a CEDR-accredited mediator. He is an Officer of the International Bar Association's Academic and Professional Development Committee. Ben is also a member of the Association of Litigation Professional Support Lawyers and a former Committee Member of the London Solicitors Litigation Association.</p>
<p><b>Amanda Webster</b> Quality Assurance Lead</p>	<p><b>Amanda Webster</b> is a solicitor in commercial practice and Director of law firm Harrison-Drury, based in Lancashire and Cumbria. During her legal career, spanning some 33 years, she has developed specialisms in regulatory law and commercial litigation. She is the Training Principal for the practice, supporting the recruitment and development of the next generation of lawyers.</p> <p>Amanda has combined her legal career with service in the public and charitable sectors. She is a Deputy District Judge, sitting in the Civil and Family Courts of West Yorkshire, and a Chair of the Police Appeals Tribunal, hearing appeals in police disciplinary cases.</p>

## Registered Intermediary Reference Team (RIRT)

The RIRT is made up of representatives appointed by each of the RI regional groups, and aims to represent the interests of RIs to the MoJ. RIRT's role is to:

- Provide a forum for the RI community to raise relevant matters regarding the WIS to a self-selected group of its peers for discussion in a formal environment with the MoJ.
- Achieve representation of the RI community through its membership reflecting, as far as possible, a cross-section of that community by different professions and vocations, different working patterns and backgrounds. To have all regional support group areas represented.
- Ensure that the relationship between the RI community and MoJ, end-users and other stakeholders is being effectively represented and managed.

The RIRT meets quarterly with representatives from MoJ Vulnerable Users Policy.

# Part Two: Performance Analysis 2022

## Methodology

The NCA collects data pertaining to requests for RIs. This data provides a comprehensive overview of the services provided by the WIS throughout 2022 and is the primary data source for the performance analysis chapter.

Data includes:

- Total number of requests for a Registered Intermediary
- Requests by witness vulnerability
- Requests by age of witness (child or adult)
- Requests by type of witness
- Requests by end-user (police or Crown Prosecution Service)
- End-user feedback for 2022
- Numbers of active and inactive RIs (monthly figures)

Data is summarised from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022. This includes changes in the number of requests and changes relating to the distribution of requests across vulnerabilities, witness age, witness types and end-users, in addition to numbers of matched, unmatched and cancelled requests. This section also covers RI availability and end-user feedback, defined by four assessment criteria from over 2,700 cases concerning victims and prosecution witnesses where feedback was received.

To examine wider trends within the WIS and to provide comparisons to interpret the 2022 data, this section will reference Matching Service data from 2021 (1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021) and 2020 (1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020). Data from the same annual periods for 2011-2020 has also been included to provide long-term context on demand for WIS services. All references to increases and decreases are measured in terms of percentage change.<sup>3</sup>

## Summary

In 2022 the WIS received 8,125 requests for RIs, representing the highest number of requests for RIs in a calendar year since the national WIS rollout in 2008 and a 1.8% year-on-year increase from the corresponding period in 2021. The growth in the number of referrals has decreased markedly from the 14.1% increase recorded between 2020 and 2021.

The overall increase in service usage extends to the number of citations for four of the seven recorded vulnerability categories; figure 4 and table 1 (*see pages 19 and 20*) show

<sup>3</sup> As opposed to a percentage point change.

increases ranging from 2.4% to 12.8%, and decreases ranging from 1.2% to 4.5%. The largest increases have been observed among citations for children with mental disorders and children with learning disabilities, rising by 12.8% (79 citations) and 9.3% (191 citations) respectively. A small 1.2% decrease in citations has been recorded for children without a co-existing vulnerability (the most frequently cited vulnerability overall), while decreases of 1.5% and 4.5% were recorded respectively for adults and children with physical disabilities (these being the least frequently cited vulnerabilities)

Of all requests for RIs 95.4% were successfully matched, representing a minimal 0.1% increase from 2021. This trend does not apply equally across the board, with matching success rates increasing across all child vulnerability types but decreasing across all adult vulnerability types. Overall, the WIS proved itself able to deliver in the vast majority of cases despite sustaining the increases in demand recorded since 2020.

Police forces continue to make up the majority (80%) of end-user requests, as demonstrated by figure 10 (see page 28). Requests from the police have increased by 0.3% (up 2 requests from 2021) to a record high of 6,402 requests. Requests from the CPS have seen a significant 7.2% increase (up 116 requests from 2021).

End-user feedback for RIs throughout 2022 remained substantially positive, with 99.9% of all responses recorded as 'excellent', 'more than satisfactory' or 'satisfactory'.

## Cancelled Requests

A request for an RI may be cancelled in circumstances such as an early guilty plea, a withdrawal of complaint from the victim, or if the witness is unable or no longer wishes to proceed for any reason (e.g. medical reasons).

## Unmatched Requests

Unmatched requests refer to rare instances in which an RI could not be assigned to a case following a request for RI assistance.

If the court agrees to adjourn, the request will still be recorded as unmatched and a new request (reflecting the new trial date) will be generated. Therefore, unmatched requests do not necessarily indicate the individual in need of assistance did not receive an intermediary for the case concerned.

A request for an RI may go unmatched in circumstances where the WIT is unable to provide an RI within the timeframe specified by the end-user, if all RIs have declined to accept a case, or if there are no RIs with availability on the date(s) of a trial. In exceptionally rare circumstances the WIT may be unable to provide an RI with the necessary skills to take on a complex case.

Where it is not possible to match a request, the National Vulnerable Witness Adviser will provide specialist advice to end-users. They are often deployed to assist in person.



# Total Requests for RIs

A total of 8,125 requests for an RI were made via the WIS in 2022, an average of 677 requests per month.

This amounts to a 1.8% increase in requests (up by 140) since 2021, during which 7,985 requests were made. It also represents a 574% increase (up by 6,919) since 2010, during which 1,206 requests were made. Figure 1 shows the change in the total number of requests over the past ten years.

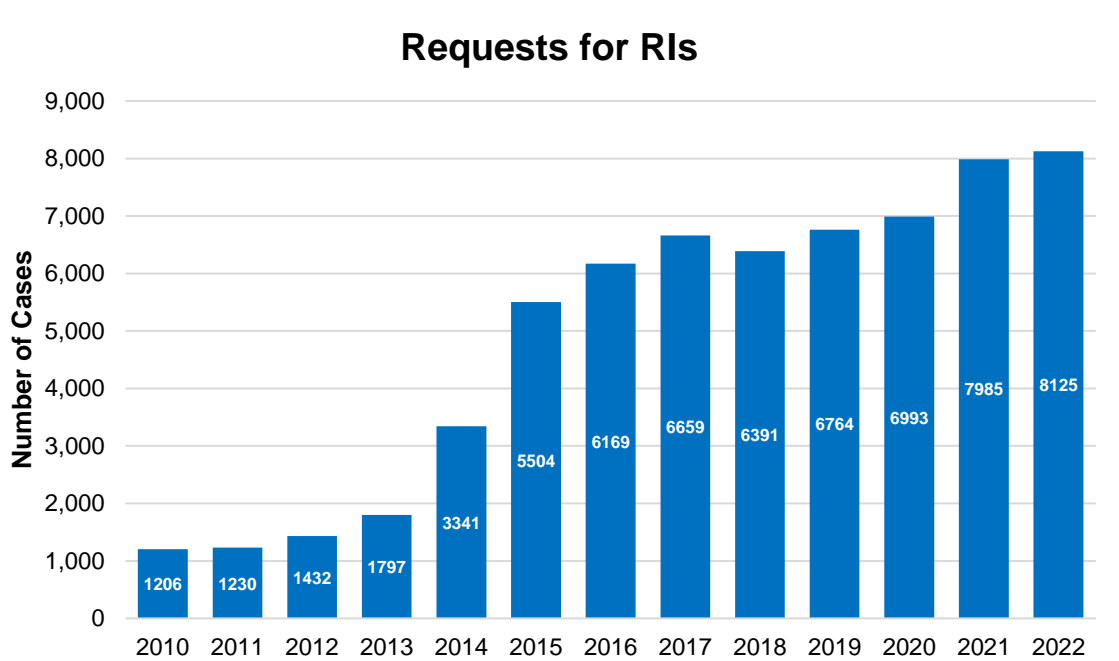


Figure 1

## Overall Change: Matching Success Rates

Of all 8,125 requests in 2022, 95.4% (7,754) were matched, with 2.5% (195) unmatched and 2.1% (172) cancelled.<sup>4</sup>

This represents a 0.1% increase in the percentage of matched requests from 2021 (95.3% requests matched) and a 2.8% decrease from 2020 (98.1% requests matched).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Figure 2. NCA Matching Service Data 2022

<sup>5</sup> Figure 3. NCA Matching Service Data 2020 – 2022

### Total Matched Requests: 2022

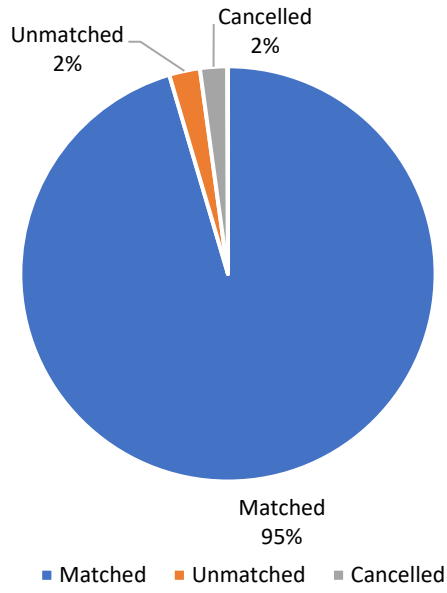


Figure 2

### Total Matched Requests: Annual Comparison

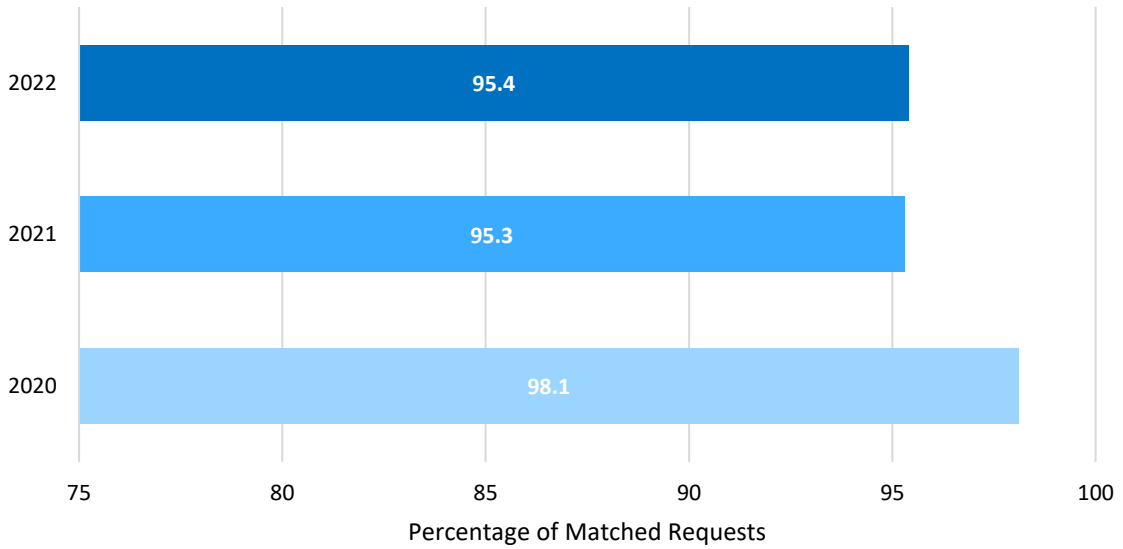


Figure 3

# Requests by Witness Vulnerability

There are seven vulnerability categories which can be recorded on RI Request for Service (RfS) forms<sup>6</sup> to indicate the needs of a witness:

- Child without Concurrent Vulnerability
- Child with Mental Disorder
- Child with Learning Disability
- Child with Physical Disability
- Adult with Mental Disorder
- Adult with Learning Disability
- Adult with Physical Disability

As a witness can have multiple vulnerabilities cited on an RfS form, the combined figures in this section exceed the figures for the total number of requests detailed above.

## Definitions and Examples

The examples set out in the table below are non-exhaustive. These are just some of the conditions that can affect a person’s ability to communicate effectively.

Eligibility criteria for RI assistance (as stipulated by section 16 of the YJCEA 1999) are set out on page 6 of this report.

Vulnerability Type	Definition/Non-Exhaustive Examples
<b>Child without Concurrent Vulnerability</b>	Refers exclusively to children who are entitled to an RI because their sole vulnerability is being under the age of 18.
<b>Mental Disorder</b>	Any disorder or disability of the mind. <sup>7</sup> Examples may include, but are <u>not limited to</u> : anxiety; depression; bipolar affective disorder; obsessive-compulsive disorder; a personality disorder; schizophrenia; dementia (including Alzheimer’s disease).
<b>Learning Disability</b>	Affects the way a person understands information or how they communicate. This means they can have difficulty: understanding new or complex information; learning new skills; coping independently. <sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> To request the assistance of an RI, the end-user (usually the police or CPS) submits a RfS form to the NCA’s Witness Intermediary Team. Each request specifies the vulnerability or vulnerabilities that the witness has.

<sup>7</sup> Mental Health Act 1983, Section 1(2)

<sup>8</sup> National Health Service, 2018, ([www.nhs.uk/conditions/learning-disabilities/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/learning-disabilities/))

	Examples may include but are <u>not limited to</u> : ADHD; autism spectrum disorder (including Asperger’s Syndrome); dysarthria; language delay/disorder; selective mutism.
<b>Physical Disability</b>	A physical impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative impact on a person’s ability to do normal daily activities. <sup>9</sup>  Examples may include but are <u>not limited to</u> : Stammer/stutter; a voice disorder (including laryngectomy and tracheotomy); brain or head injury (including a stroke); neurological and progressive disorders (including motor neurone disease and Parkinson’s disease); cerebral palsy.

## Breakdown of Vulnerabilities Cited in Request for Service Forms

Of all vulnerabilities cited on RI RfS forms in 2022, 29.5% concerned children without a concurrent vulnerability, making this the most frequently cited vulnerability. This was followed by children with a learning disability at 22.4%, adults with a learning disability at 20.1%, adults with a mental disorder at 14.7%, children with a mental disorder at 7%, adults with a physical disability at 5.2% and children with physical disability at 1.1%.

Breakdown of Requests (Vulnerability): 2022

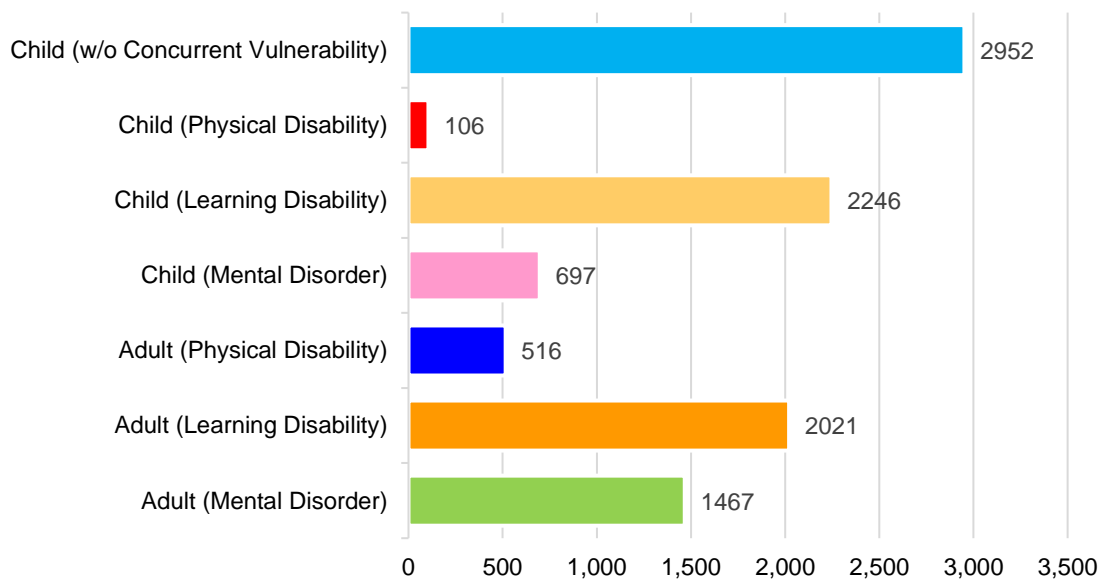


Figure 4

<sup>9</sup> Equality Act 2010, Section 6(1)

## Change Across All Requests

Since 2021, increases in the total number of RfS form citations were recorded for all except one vulnerability category.<sup>10</sup>

For child victims and witnesses, citations for mental disorders increased by 12.8% (up 79 citations), those for learning disabilities increased by 9.3% (up 191 citations), those for children without concurrent vulnerabilities decreased by 1.2% (down 35 citations), and those for physical disabilities decreased by 4.5% (down 5 citations).

For adult victims and witnesses, citations for mental disorders increased by 4.8% (up 67 citations), those for learning disabilities increased by 2.4% (up 47 citations), and those for physical disabilities decreased by 1.5% (down 8 citations).

CHANGE ACROSS ALL REQUESTS (VULNERABILITY)			
Vulnerability	2021	2022	Change from 2020/21 (%)
Child (w/o Concurrent vulnerability)	2,987	2,952	-1.2%
Child – Mental Disorder	618	697	+12.8%
Child – Learning Disability	2,055	2,246	+9.3%
Child – Physical Disability	111	106	-4.5%
Adult – Mental Disorder	1,400	1,467	+4.8%
Adult – Learning Disability	1,974	2,021	+2.4%
Adult – Physical Disability	524	516	-1.5%

Table 1

RI Requests by Vulnerability: Annual Comparison

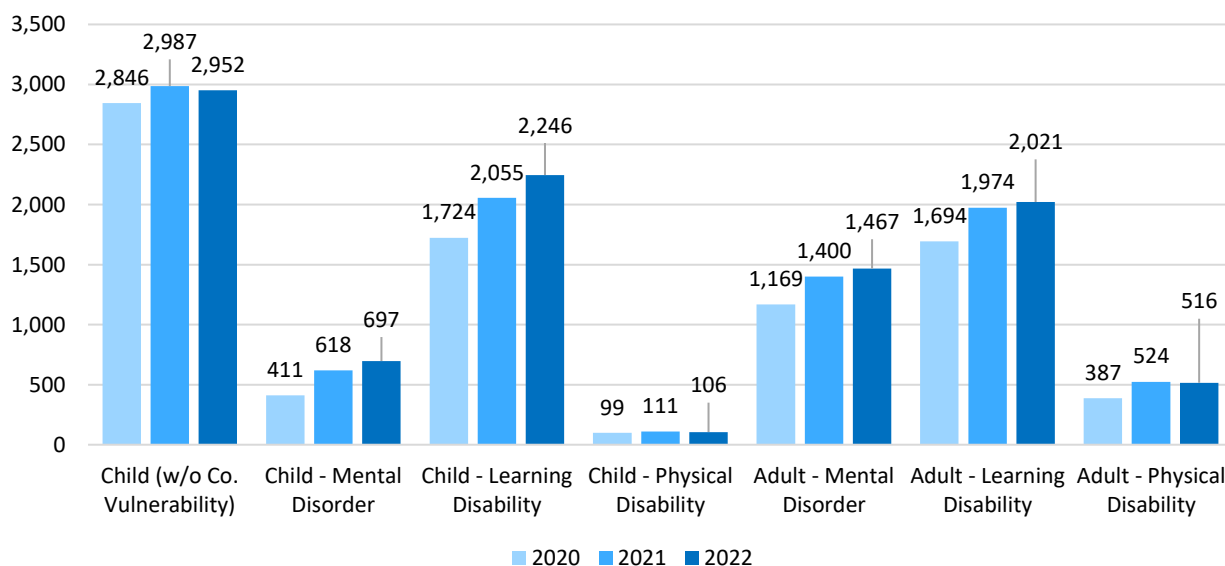


Figure 5

<sup>10</sup> Figure 4 and Table 1. NCA Matching Service Data 2020 – 2022

## Matching Success Rates

Increases in the percentage of matched requests were recorded across all child vulnerability types since 2021, while decreases were recorded for all adult vulnerability types.

For child victims and witnesses, the percentage of matched requests for physical disabilities increased by 4.7%, children without concurrent vulnerabilities by 1.4%, learning disabilities by 0.7%, and mental disorders by 0.4%.

For adult victims and witnesses, the percentage of matched requests for physical disabilities decreased by 3.1%, mental disorders by 2.5%, and learning disabilities by 1.2%.<sup>11</sup>

CHANGE IN SUCCESS RATES (VULNERABILITY)			
Vulnerability	Matched in 2021 (%)	Matched in 2022 (%)	Change from 2021 (%)
Child (w/o Concurrent Vulnerability)	96.5	97.9	+1.4%
Child – Mental Disorder	95.5	95.8	+0.4%
Child – Learning Disability	96.5	97.1	+0.7%
Child – Physical Disability	92.8	97.2	+4.7%
Adult – Mental Disorder	91.9	89.6	-2.5%
Adult – Learning Disability	93.8	92.7	-1.2%
Adult – Physical Disability	92.4	89.5	-3.1%

Table 2

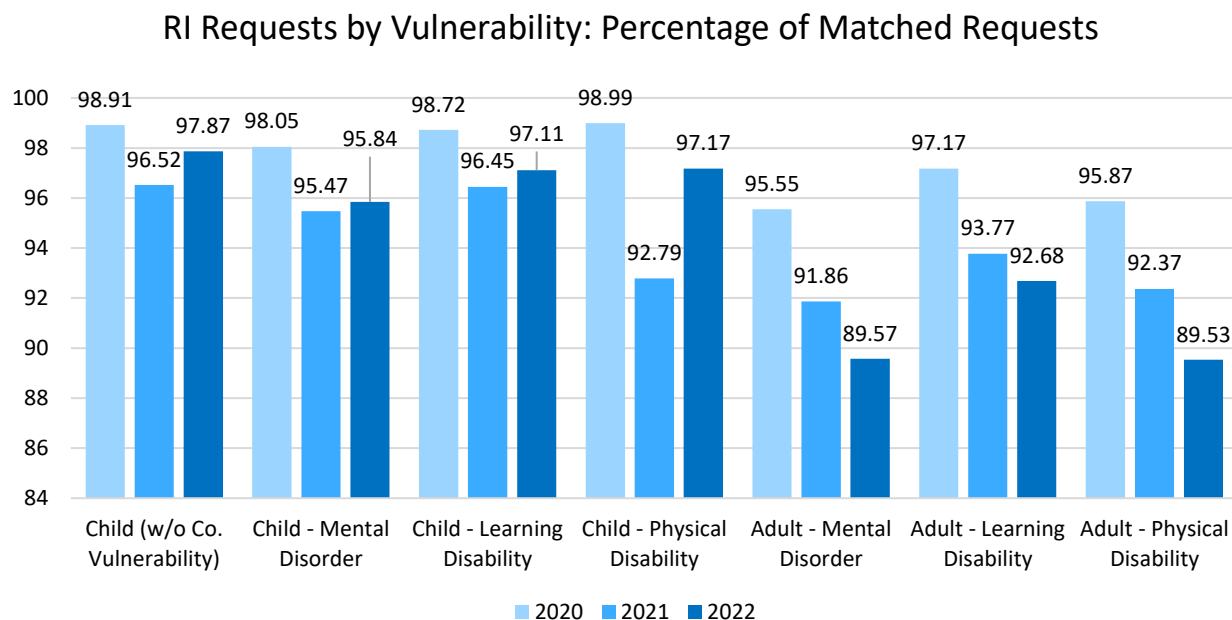


Figure 6

<sup>11</sup> Table 2, NCA Matching Service Data 2020 – 2022

For child victims and witnesses, 2% of requests for mental disorders were unmatched, followed by requests for physical disabilities (1.9% unmatched), requests for children without concurrent vulnerabilities (1.1% unmatched), and requests for learning disabilities (1% unmatched).

For adult victims and witnesses, 5.8% of requests for physical disabilities were unmatched, followed by requests for mental disorders (5.7% unmatched), and requests for learning disabilities (4.2% unmatched).

### **CHILD (WITHOUT CONCURRENT VULNERABILITY)**

#### **Matched Requests: +1.4 %**

Of the 2,952 requests for children with no concurrent vulnerability, 97.9% (2,889) were matched, with 1.1% (31) unmatched and 1.1% (32) cancelled.

This represents a 1.4% increase in the percentage of matched cases from 2021 (96.5% child w/o concurrent vulnerability requests matched) and a 1.1% decrease from 2020 (98.9% requests matched).<sup>12</sup>

### **CHILD - MENTAL DISORDER**

#### **Matched Requests: +0.4%**

Of the 697 requests for children with a mental disorder, 95.8% (668) were matched, with 2% (14) unmatched and 2% (14) cancelled.

This represents a 0.4% increase in the percentage of matched cases from 2021 (95.5% child mental disorder requests matched) and a 2.3% decrease from 2020 (98.1% requests matched).<sup>13</sup>

### **CHILD - LEARNING DISABILITY**

#### **Matched Requests: +0.7%**

Of the 2,246 requests for children with a learning disability, 97.1% (2181) were matched, with 1% (23) unmatched and 1.8% (48) cancelled.

This represents 0.7% increase in the percentage of matched cases from 2020 and a 1.6% decrease from 2020 (98.7% requests matched).<sup>14</sup>

### **CHILD - PHYSICAL DISABILITY**

#### **Matched Requests: +4.7%**

Of the 106 requests for children with physical disabilities, 97.2% were matched (103), with 2% (2) unmatched and 1% (1) cancelled.

This represents a 4.7% increase in the percentage of matched cases from 2021 (92.8% child physical disabilities requests matched) and a 1.8% decrease from 2020 (99% requests matched).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Figure 6, *NCA Matching Service Data 2020 – 2022*

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

## **ADULT - MENTAL DISORDER**

### **Matched Requests: -2.5%**

Of the 1,467 requests for adults with a mental disorder, 89.6% (1314) were matched, with 5.7% (84) unmatched and 4.6% (67) cancelled.

This represents a 2.5% decrease in the percentage of matched cases from 2021 (91.9% adult mental disorder requests matched) and a 6.3% decrease from 2020 (95.6% requests matched).<sup>16</sup>

## **ADULT - LEARNING DISABILITY**

### **Matched Requests: -1.2%**

Of the 2,021 requests for adults with a learning disability, 92.7% (1,873) were matched, with 4.2% (85) unmatched and 3% (61) cancelled.

This represents a 1.2% decrease in the percentage of matched cases from 2021 (93.8% adult learning disabilities requests matched) and a 4.6% decrease from 2020 (97.2% requests matched).<sup>17</sup>

## **ADULT - PHYSICAL DISABILITY**

### **Matched Requests: -3.1%**

Of the 516 requests adults with physical disabilities, 89.5% (462) were matched, with 5.8% (30) unmatched and 4.5% (23) cancelled.

This represents a 3.1% decrease in the percentage of matched cases from 2021 (92.4% adult physical disabilities requests matched) and a 6.6% decrease from 2020 (95.9% Adult Physical Disabilities requests matched).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Figure 6, *NCA Matching Service Data 2020 – 2022*

<sup>17</sup> Figure 6, *NCA Matching Service Data 2020 – 2022*

<sup>18</sup> Figure 6, *NCA Matching Service Data 2020 – 2022*



# Requests by Age of Witness (Children/Adults)

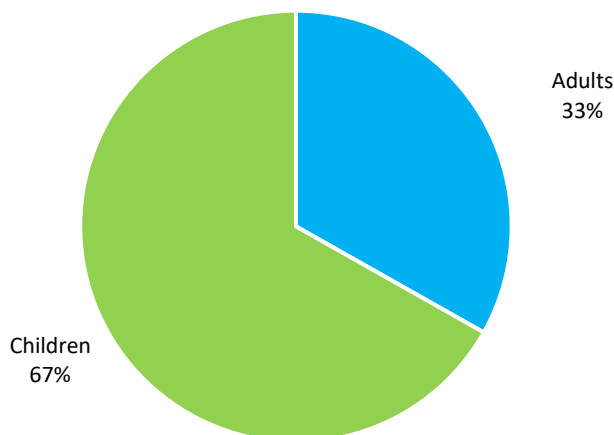
The NCA records the number of requests made on behalf of adults and children:

- Children (under 18s)
- Adults (over 18s)

## Breakdown of Requests (Children/Adults)

Of all 8,125 requests for RIs in 2022, 67% of requests (5,429) were on behalf of children. The remaining 33% (2,696) were made on behalf of adults.<sup>19</sup>

**Breakdown of Requests (Adult/Child): 2022**



**Figure 7**

## Change Across All Requests

Since 2021, the number of requests for children has increased by 2.2% (up by 117 requests) and the number of requests for adults has increased by 0.9% (up by 23 requests).<sup>20</sup>

CHANGE ACROSS ALL REQUESTS (AGE OF WITNESS)			
Age	2021	2022	Change (%)
Child	5,312	5,429	+2.2
Adult	2,673	2,696	+0.9

**Table 3**

<sup>19</sup> Figure 7, NCA Matching Service Data 2022

<sup>20</sup> Table 3, NCA Matching Service Data 2020 – 2022

## Matching Success Rates

Since 2021, the matching success rates increased for children and decreased for adults. Following a record number of requests, the percentage of matched requests increased by 1.1% for children and decreased by 1.8% for adults.<sup>21</sup>

CHANGE IN SUCCESS RATES (AGE OF WITNESS)			
Age	2021 (%)	2022 (%)	Change in Matched Requests (%)
Children	96.3	97.4	+1.1
Adults	93.1	91.4	-1.8

Table 4

### CHILDREN

#### Matched Requests: +1.1%

Of the 5,429 requests children, 97.4% (5,289) were matched, 1.1% (60) were unmatched, with the remaining 1.5% (79) being cancelled.<sup>22</sup>

This represents a 1.1% increase in the percentage of matched cases from 2021 (96.3% requests matched) and a 1.4% decrease from 2020 (98.4% requests matched).<sup>23</sup>

### ADULTS

#### Matched Requests: -1.8%

Of the 2,696 requests for adults, 91.4% (2,465) were matched, 5% (135) were unmatched, with the remaining 3.4% (93) being cancelled.<sup>24</sup>

This represents a 1.8% decrease in the percentage of matched cases from 2021 (93.1% cases matched) and a 5.5% decrease from 2020 (96.7% requests matched).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Table 4, NCA Matching Service Data 2020 – 2022

<sup>22</sup> One request for children was awaiting assignment to an RI at the time of writing

<sup>23</sup> Table 4, NCA Matching Service Data 2020 – 2022

<sup>24</sup> Three requests for adults were awaiting assignment to an RI at the time of writing

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

# Requests by Witness Type

The NCA divides Matching Service request data into three witness types.<sup>26</sup>

- Victims
- Prosecution Witnesses
- Defence Witness

## Breakdown of Requests

Of all 8,125 requests for RIs in 2022, 90.5% of recorded requests (7,352) fell into the 'Victims' category, 9.5% (770) were made for 'prosecution witnesses, and >0.1% (2) were made for defence witnesses.

**Breakdown of Requests (Witness Type): 2022**



**Figure 8**

## Change Across All Requests

Since 2021, the number of requests for victims has increased by 1.9% (up by 139 requests), the number of requests for prosecution witnesses remained the same, and the number of requests for defence witness increased by 50% (up by 1).

CHANGE ACROSS ALL REQUESTS (WITNESS TYPE)			
Witness Type	2021	2022	Change (%)
Victims	7213	7352	+1.9
Prosecution Witnesses	770	770	Nil
Defence Witness	2	3	+50

**Table 5**

<sup>26</sup> Data derived from Police and CPS Request for Service (RfS) forms. RfS forms may not always differentiate 'victims' from 'prosecution witnesses'. In legal terms, a victim appears in court as a witness.

## Matching Success Rates

The matching success rate for victims marginally increased since 2021, while decreasing by 0.1% for prosecution witnesses and remaining the same for defence witnesses. A further data breakdown has not been provided for defence witnesses due to the low volume of cases.

CHANGE IN SUCCESS RATES (WITNESS TYPE)			
Witness Type	2021 (%)	2022 (%)	Change in Matched Requests (%)
<b>Victims</b>	95.2	95.5	<b>+0.3</b>
<b>Prosecution Witnesses</b>	95.3	95.2	<b>-0.1</b>
<b>Defence Witness</b>	100	100	<b>Nil</b>

Table 6

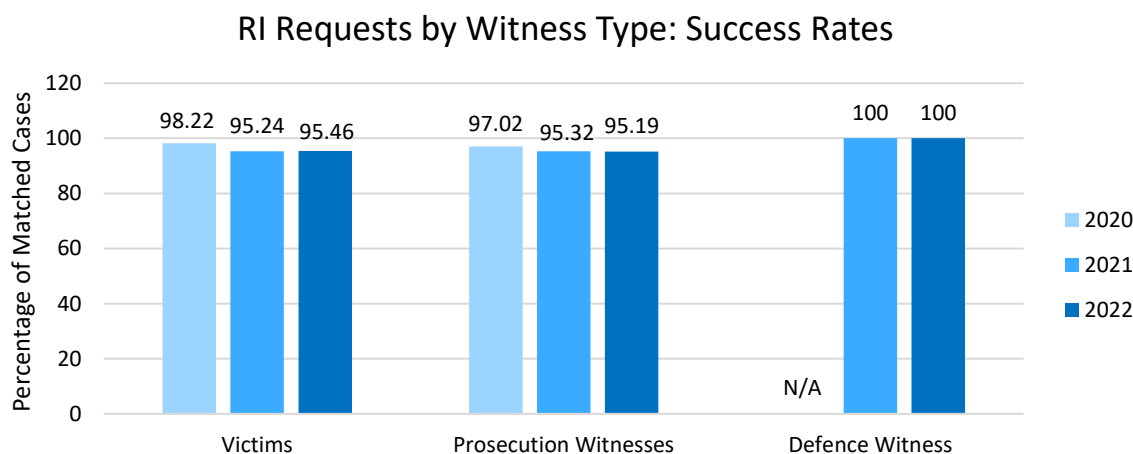


Figure 9

### VICTIMS

**Matched Requests: +0.3%**

Of the 7,352 requests for victims, 95.5% (7,018) were matched, 2.4% (179) were unmatched, with the remaining 2.1% (151) being cancelled.

This represents a 0.3% increase in the percentage of matched cases from 2021 (95.2% victims' requests matched) and a 2.8% decrease from 2020 (98.2% victims' requests matched).<sup>27</sup>

### PROSECUTION WITNESSES

**Matched Requests: -0.1%**

Of the 770 requests for prosecution witnesses, 95.2% (733) were matched, 2.1% (16) were unmatched, with the remaining 2.7% (21) being cancelled.

This represents a 0.1% decrease in the percentage of matched cases from 2021 (95.3% prosecution witness requests matched) and an 1.9% decrease from 2020 (97% prosecution witnesses' requests matched).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Figure 9. NCA Matching Service Data 2020 – 2022

<sup>28</sup> Figure 9. NCA Matching Service Data 2018 - 2021

# Requests by End-User

There are three categories of end-user that have submitted requests to the NCA in 2022:

- Police
- CPS
- Solicitor

## Breakdown of Requests

Requests from police forces continue to constitute the majority (78%, 6,402) of all requests for RIs in 2022, with requests from the CPS accounting for 22% (1,720 requests).<sup>29</sup> Requests from solicitors correspond with requests for defence witnesses and volumes remain exceptionally small; a further data breakdown has not been provided for this reason.

Breakdown of Requests (End-User): 2022

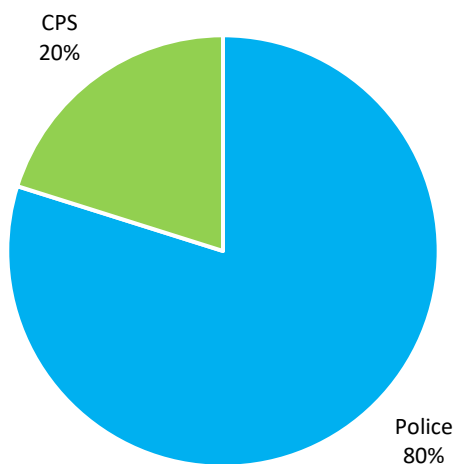


Figure 10

## Change Across All Requests

Since 2021, the number requests from police forces have increased by 0.3% (up by 22 requests), and requests from the CPS have increased by 7.2% (up by 116 requests).<sup>30</sup>

CHANGE ACROSS ALL REQUESTS (END-USER)			
End-User	2021	2022	Change (%)
Police	6,380	6,402	+0.3
CPS	1,604	1,720	+7.2
Solicitor	1	3	+200

Table 8

<sup>29</sup> Figure 10, NCA Matching Service Data 2020/21

<sup>30</sup> Table 8, NCA Matching Service Data 2019 – 2021

## Matching Success Rates

The matching success rate for requests from the police increased by 0.8% from 2021, while the success rate for CPS requests decreased by 1.9%.<sup>31</sup>

CHANGE IN SUCCESS RATES (END-USER)			
End-User	2021 (%)	2022 (%)	Change in Matched Requests (%)
Police	95.9	96.7	+0.8
CPS	92.6	90.8	-1.9
Solicitor	100	100	Nil

Table 9

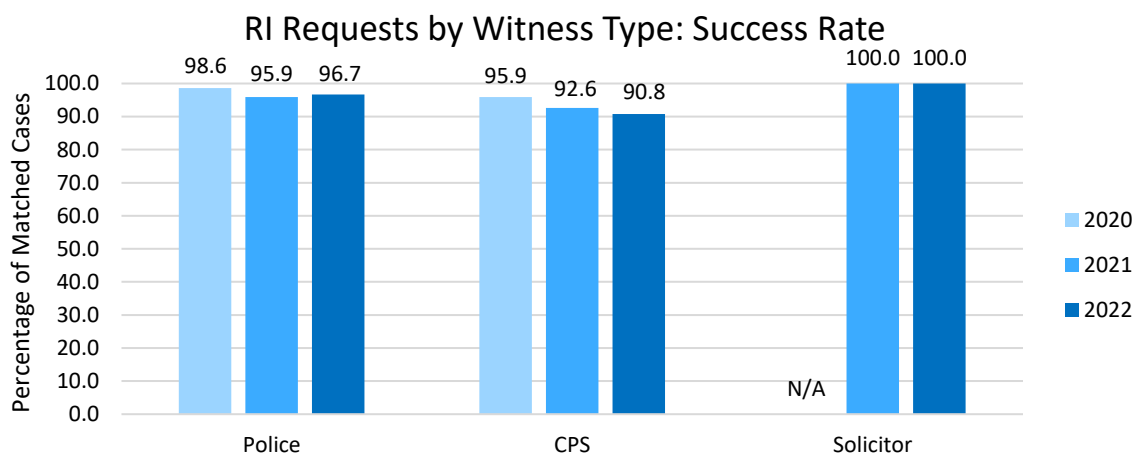


Figure 11

### POLICE

#### Matched requests +0.8%

Of the 6,402 requests from police forces, 96.7% (6,190) were matched, 1.2% (75) were unmatched, with the remaining 2.1% (134) being cancelled.<sup>32</sup>

This represents a 0.8% increase in the percentage of matched cases from 2021 (95.9% police requests matched) and a 1.9% decrease from 2020 (98.6% requests matched).<sup>33</sup>

### CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE

#### Matched requests -1.9%

Of the 1,720 requests from the CPS, 90.8 (1,561) were matched, 7% (120) were unmatched, with the remaining 2.2% (38) being cancelled.<sup>34</sup>

This represents a 1.9% decrease in the percentage of matched cases from 2021 (92.6% CPS requests matched) and a 5.6% decrease from 2020 (95.9% requests matched).<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Table 9, *NCA Matching Service Data 2020 - 2022*

<sup>32</sup> Three police requests were awaiting assignment to an RI at the time of writing

<sup>33</sup> Figure 11. *NCA Matching Service Data 2020 – 2022*

<sup>34</sup> One CPS requests was awaiting assignment to an RI at the time of writing

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

# End-User Feedback

End-user feedback (usually from the police or the CPS) following the provision of an RI is evaluated against four criteria:

- Compliance with Criminal Procedures
- Personal Conduct / Professionalism of the RI
- Quality of Information Provided by the RI
- Usefulness of the RI in the Proceedings

The feedback under each criterion is disaggregated between RI provision for victims and RI provision for prosecution witnesses. When feedback for a particular case falls below 'satisfactory', the QAB will investigate.

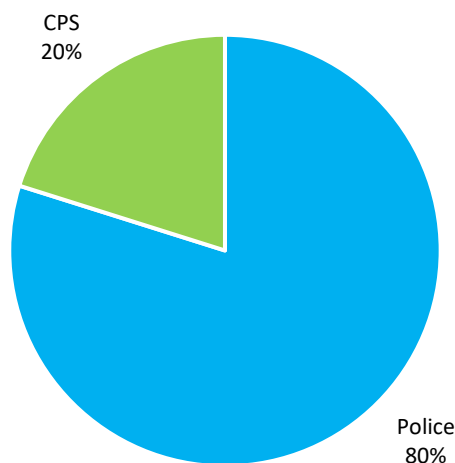
End-users assess each criterion according to a five-tier scale (excellent, more than satisfactory, satisfactory, less than satisfactory, and poor).

## Feedback Overview

Below, the feedback across all four criteria and both witness types has been averaged to provide an insight into RI performance as viewed by end-users over the course of 2020/21.

Against 2,787 cases (those where feedback was received)<sup>36</sup>, 99.9% received 'satisfactory', 'more than satisfactory' or 'excellent' feedback. Of the remaining 0.1%, 0.09% (11) of feedback was 'less than satisfactory' and 0.01% (1) 'poor'.<sup>37</sup>

**Breakdown of Requests (End-User): 2022**



**Figure 12**

<sup>36</sup> Feedback is not always received.

<sup>37</sup> Figure 12. *NCA Matching Service Data 2022*

## Feedback Across All Criteria

Below, all results, encompassing both witness types and all feedback criteria have been presented.<sup>38</sup> This further demonstrates the high-quality service provided by RIs across the WIS.

VICTIMS' CASES						
Feedback Criteria	'Excellent' (%)	More than Satisfactory (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Less than Satisfactory (%)	Poor (%)	Responses
Compliance with criminal procedures	92.3 (2007)	6.6 (145)	1.0 (21)	0.0 (1)	Nil	2174
Personal conduct and professionalism	95.3 (2075)	4.1 (89)	0.5 (10)	0.1 (3)	0.0 (1)	2178
Quality of information provided by the RI	93.4 (2032)	5.6 (121)	0.9 (20)	0.1 (2)	0.0 (1)	2176
Usefulness of the RI in the proceedings	91.8 (1968)	6.7 (144)	1.3 (27)	0.3 (6)	Nil	2145

Table 10

PROSECUTION WITNESSES' CASES						
Feedback Criteria	'Excellent' (%)	More than Satisfactory (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Less than Satisfactory (%)	Poor (%)	Responses
Compliance with criminal procedures	86.2 (169)	13.8 (27)	Nil	Nil	Nil	196
Personal conduct and professionalism	90.8 (178)	9.2 (18)	Nil	Nil	Nil	196
Quality of information provided by the RI	90.8 (177)	7.7 (15)	1.5 (3)	Nil	Nil	195
Usefulness of the RI in the proceedings	88.6 (172)	10.3 (20)	1.0 (2)	Nil	Nil	194

Table 11

<sup>38</sup> Tables 10-11. NCA Matching Service Data 2022



# Active RI Figures

The number of active and inactive RIs varies throughout the course of the year. The figures below correspond to active and inactive figures on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of each month between January 2021 and December 2022.

## Active RIs

An ‘active’ RI is one that is actively accepting new cases, as delegated by the NCA.

## Inactive RIs

An ‘inactive’ RI is one that is recorded on the Intermediary Register as being unavailable to be offered and accept new cases. An inactive RI may still work on ongoing cases. It is accepted that RIs will have other commitments that may result in them becoming inactive for periods of time.

Reasons for inactivity vary widely and include primary employment commitments, maternity leave, sabbatical periods, academic study, and holiday periods. The duration of this inactivity varies accordingly. For most these periods are short; RI work is managed around them and the NCA is kept informed of their status.

## RI Availability Overview

The number of active RIs averaged at 147 in 2022; equivalent to 69% of the average total number of RIs on the WIS register over this period (212). 26 RIs left the WIS, while monthly ‘active’ figures have continued to fluctuate.

The total number of RIs increased by 10% (20) over the course of 2022. This increase reflects sustained recruitment and training activities funded by the Ministry of Justice.

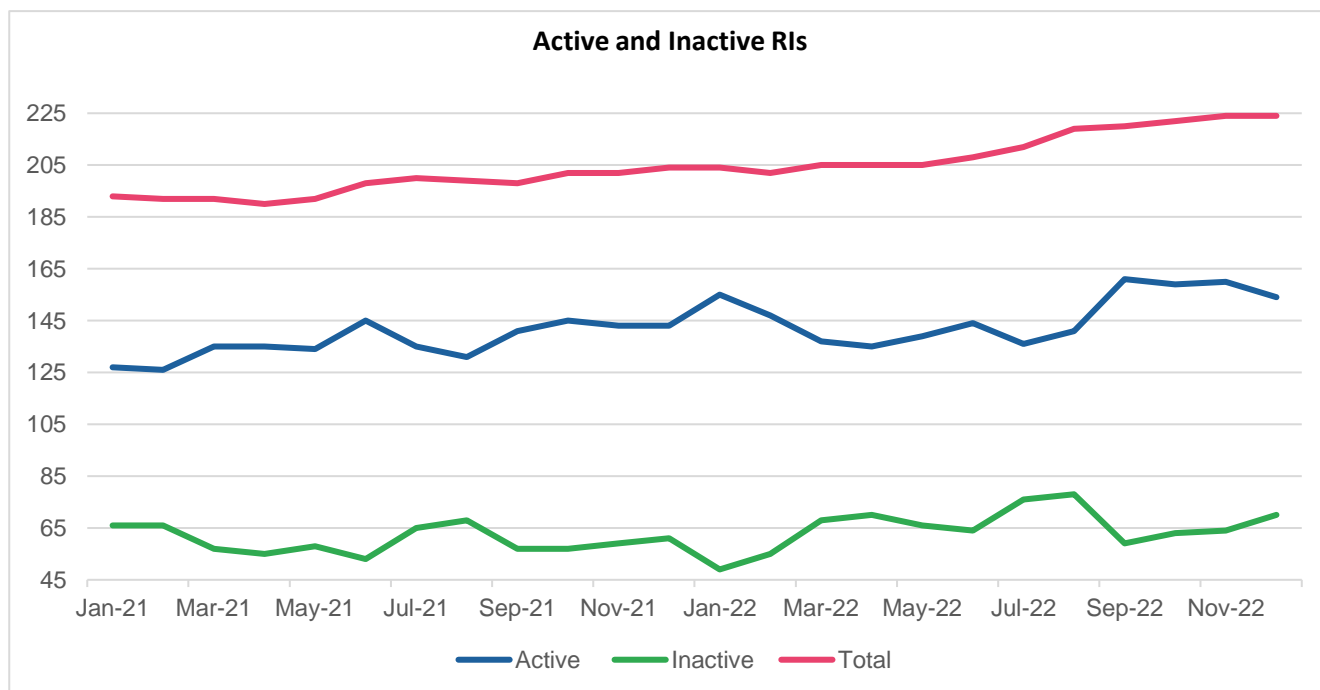


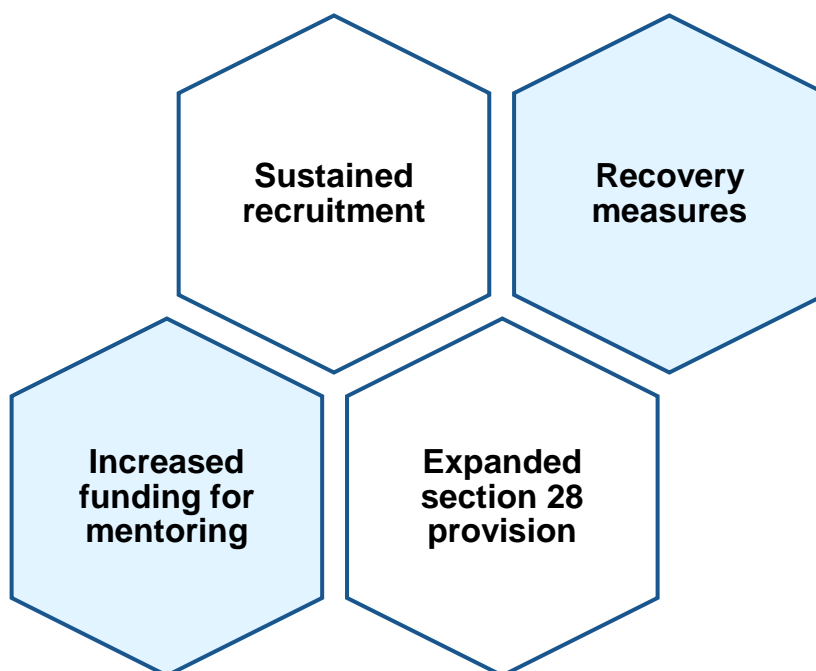
Figure 13

# Part Three: Key Developments in 2022

## Summary

The MoJ continued its national WIS recruitment strategy, adding 31 new RIs in 2022 and increasing the WIS headcount by 10%. In parallel, HMCTS Appointed Intermediary Services were launched to assist vulnerable parties beyond the WIS.

To optimise RI services and alleviate pressure on the scheme, a multi-stage WIS recovery plan was introduced. Additionally, the MoJ expanded Section 28 provisions for specific victims, increased funding for RI mentoring, and implemented new policies for mentoring and continuing professional development.



## Continued RI recruitment

The MoJ continued delivering the national WIS recruitment strategy launched in September 2021. This resulted in the appointment of 31 new RIs in 2022, increasing the total number of RIs added to the WIS Register since September 2021 to 47.

These efforts resulted in a 13% increase in the WIS headcount between September 2021 and December 2022, enabling the scheme to better support service users and respond more effectively to the growing demand for intermediary services. The enhanced capacity has also allowed for a more diverse range of skills and expertise within the WIS, which further contributes to the Scheme’s ability to adapt to the evolving needs of service users across the justice system.

The Registered Intermediary Training Team (RITT) was essential to this work, delivering five training courses throughout 2022 to maximise recruitment volumes. The programme continued to receive excellent feedback. The average pass rate was 75% of those enrolled.

The MoJ also allocated funding to support the continued development of the RITT by recruiting three additional members to the team, further enhancing its capacity to deliver high-quality training to prospective RIs.

## **HMCTS Appointed Intermediary Services launched**

HMCTS Appointed Intermediary Services (HAIS) were introduced in April 2022 to provide intermediaries for vulnerable parties that fall outside the scope of the WIS, including defendants in criminal cases and parties in family, civil and tribunal cases across England and Wales and tribunals in Scotland.

At the commencement of the frameworks there were:

- Three managed and approved service providers (MASPs) with intermediary services available nationally; and
- 12 approved service providers (ASPs), which are self-employed individuals who provide specialist intermediary services.

The HAIS frameworks reopen for potential new bidders every 6 months; and following the first reopening in October 2022, HMCTS was able to bring in three new ASP providers to join the frameworks and provide intermediary services under HAIS.

The new HMCTS contract has successfully completed over 10,000 bookings including approximately 4000 assessments and 6000 hearing attendances in its first year.

## **WIS Recovery Plan introduced**

To alleviate pressure on the WIS, the MoJ and the NCA have introduced a joint multi-stage WIS recovery plan. This initiative seeks to optimise the use of RI services, ensure resources are used efficiently and to continue providing essential support to service users effectively across the justice system.

As part of this strategy, police officers and the CPS were urged to exercise extra care when requesting RI services. Specific guidance included seeking fixed trial dates wherever possible, considering alternate dates when an RI is unavailable, allowing ample time for court report deadlines, and making concerted efforts to keep RIs informed of case progress.

A key element of the plan was the introduction of a flexible 'return to practice' programme, aimed at encouraging former RIs to re-join with the WIS. This initiative has helped bolster the number of active RIs, complementing the impact of ongoing recruitment efforts and strengthening the overall capacity of the scheme.

## **Expanded Section 28 provision**

In September 2022, the MoJ completed the rollout of the Section 28 special measure for victims of sexual and modern slavery offences in all Crown Courts, enabling these victims to have their cross examination pre-recorded and then played at the trial. This was a

further enhancement of the Section 28 special measure, which has been available for children and vulnerable adults in all Crown Courts since November 2020.

The MoJ is continuing to work with the judiciary, police and the CPS to ensure that it can support victims and witnesses as well as possible. RIs have helped contribute to the development of this special measure through the Section 28 Delivery Subgroup.

## **Increased funding for RI mentoring**

The MoJ acted on QAB's recommendation to increase the MoJ-funded mentoring allowance, improving the range of support provided to RIs.

For newly qualified RIs, the mentoring allowance was doubled, increasing from three hours to six hours. This enhanced support has helped new RIs build confidence as they begin their roles, fostering a smoother and more effective integration into the scheme.

Additionally, three hours of MoJ-funded mentoring were introduced for RIs returning to practice after a period of inactivity lasting six months or longer. This initiative is intended to encourage experienced RIs to re-engage with their profession, ensuring their valuable expertise continues to benefit service users and contribute to the effectiveness of the WIS.

## **New QAB policies**

The QAB developed and implemented two new policies to further support RIs in their professional development: the Mentoring and Support Policy, and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy.

These policies aim to consolidate existing practices while introducing innovative measures designed to strengthen CPD and mentoring provisions for the benefit of all RIs.

Through these new policies, the QAB seeks to create a supportive environment in which RIs can provide the best possible intermediary services. The Mentoring and Support Policy and CPD Policy demonstrate a commitment to nurturing the professional growth of RIs, ensuring they are prepared to face the challenges and complexities that arise in the course of their work.

In 2023, the MoJ and the QAB plan to further strengthen these policies through consultation with the RI community. This collaborative approach will help identify areas for improvement, refine existing provisions, and further align the policies with the needs and practical experiences of RIs, ensuring that they remain relevant and effective in fostering professional development across the WIS.

## **WIS Annual Conference**

The 2022 WIS Annual Conference was attended by over 130 individuals from across the WIS. A key event in the WIS calendar, the conference provided an opportunity for RIs and stakeholders to come together, and to share knowledge and experiences.

The event featured a wide range of topics, reflecting the developing landscape of intermediary services. Highlights included discussions on the latest revision to the

guidance on Achieving Best Evidence, the unique challenges of assisting witnesses in older age, and collaboration between RIs and spoken language interpreters. The conference also explored the benefits of working closely with the Witness Service, showcasing the potential for enhanced coordination and cooperation between the two entities in order to deliver comprehensive support throughout the justice process.

## Part Four: Finance of the Witness Intermediary Scheme

### Administrative budget

The WIS budget for 2022/23 was £603,226, with £466,620 of this designated for the NCA's Witness Intermediary Team to fund the WIS Matching Service and the QAB Secretariat.

The remaining funds (amounting to one third of the 2022/23 budget) are allocated across the WIS. This includes financing the work of the IRB, QAB and RIRT as well as corporate duties undertaken by aRIs.

WIS BUDGET 2022/23		
Fund Allocation	Gross Sum (£)	% of Annual Budget
WIS Matching Service (+ QAB Secretariat)	466,620	77
Remaining WIS Services (IRB, QAB, RIRT, recruitment, training, NQRI development, aRI duties)	136,606	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>603,226</b>	<b>100</b>

### Annual review of remuneration rates

RIs must invoice according to the national rates approved by the IRB. Fees are based upon an hourly rate, covering face-to-face appointments and report writing, with reimbursement of travel and subsistence within policy limits.

A contractual arrangement is entered into at the point that the RI accepts a Request for Service. This arrangement is between the RI, as a self-employed individual, and the service from which the request originates – usually the police or CPS.

Remuneration rates are agreed by the MoJ, the CPS and the NPCC. A review of remuneration rates takes place annually and follows an agreed procedure, with RIs invited to submit a remuneration proposal. RIs were awarded a 3% increase to the 2022/23 core hourly rate of remuneration (this increase also applied to the unsocial and travel time rates).

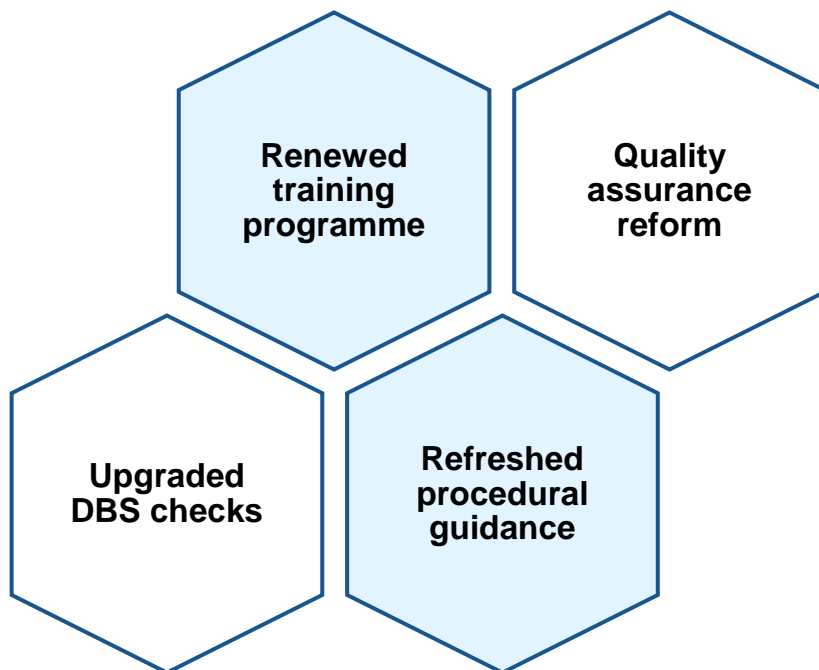
REGISTERED INTERMEDIARY PAY AWARDS (RECENT HISTORY)		
Financial Year	Award (% Increase)	Core Hourly Rate Post-Award (£)
2019-20	1	39.33
2020-21	1.5	39.92
2021-22	Nil	39.92
2022-23	3	41.20

# Part Five: Forward Look

## Summary

The MoJ aims to enhance the WIS by recruiting and training new RIs. A reformed training programme will feature a two-stage online learning experience and a refined assessment process.

Additionally, the RI Procedural Guidance Manual will be updated to reflect recent developments. Upgraded DBS checks will bolster safeguarding efforts, while quality assurance reform and further stakeholder engagement will help contribute to improved WIS governance.



## Increasing WIS capability

The MoJ remains dedicated to investing in the recruitment and training of new RIs to increase WIS capability.

We will be continuing with a national recruitment strategy, identifying candidates with skills and expertise in a wide range of communication needs. Recruitment decisions will be guided by thorough analysis of WIS data and emerging trends. This targeted approach will help to broaden the range of skills available across all police force areas and ensure that the needs of service users continue to be met.

These efforts will be integrated with ongoing court recovery initiatives, ensuring a comprehensive and coordinated approach to addressing the challenges faced by the justice system. By prioritising the expansion of RI expertise and responsiveness, we aim to create a more robust and resilient WIS that serves the evolving needs of our service users and contributes to a fair and efficient justice process.

## **Renewed RI training programme**

The RITT will take forward a series of changes to the RI training programme to develop the skills-specific aspects of the course and ensure materials are optimised for continued online delivery.

To improve trainee performance, the RITT plans to restructure the online learning experience by extending the course duration and dividing it into two stages. Trainees will be required to pass an assessment at the end of each stage to progress to the next level. A course handbook is also being developed to facilitate a more discursive and interactive programme.

Additional enhancements to the training programme include incorporating more opportunities for feedback to inform the assessment process and modifying the assessment marking system. Instead of a binary pass/fail model, the new approach will incorporate a more nuanced evaluation of trainees.

The RITT will also work to strengthen the links between recruitment, training, and post-training peer group support. This will ensure a seamless transition for newly qualified RIs and promote ongoing professional development, supporting the delivery of a quality service within the WIS.

## **Refreshed RI procedural guidance**

We will publish a new iteration of the Registered Intermediary Procedural Guidance Manual. This document will incorporate the latest procedural developments in the WIS, ensuring RIs are equipped with the knowledge, guidance, and procedural information to help navigate and perform the intermediary role within the criminal justice system.

Enhancements will include a revised court report and corresponding guidance, the introduction of a police preliminary report proforma, and strengthened protocols on safeguarding, and collaboration with other justice system workers. This comprehensive update has benefitted by extensive contributions from across the intermediary community, including the RIRT and the RITT.

## **Upgraded DBS checks**

We have recommended that the law is changed in order to make intermediaries eligible for DBS checks at Standard level. This reflects the high degree of public trust invested in people that perform the intermediary role, and will help further safeguard vulnerable individuals within the justice system.

## **Quality assurance reform**

QAB policies, including feedback and complaints, mentoring, WIS Register management, fitness to practice, and sanctions, will undergo a systematic review in collaboration between the MoJ, QAB and the RIRT. These changes will consider a variety of perspectives and be informed by feedback from the RI community.



Additionally, the QAB will recruit a new board member with practical experience of acting as a RI. This addition will enhance the Board's expertise, and further broaden the range of knowledge and experience at its disposal.

## **Engagement on intermediaries' review**

We will be actively engaging with RIs and other key stakeholders in intermediary services to gather valuable insights and inform recommendations for our review of intermediary provision across the justice system.

By collaborating with stakeholders and analysing the latest data on intermediary services, we will be better equipped to shape a more effective and responsive intermediary provision that meets the evolving needs of the justice system and the WIS.



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