**SOCIAL CARE WALES WITNESSES**

**GIVING EVIDENCE AT**

**A FITNESS TO PRACTISE HEARING**

1. When you arrive at the hearing location, someone from Social Care Wales (usually the Clerk) will meet you and take you to a room which will be for witnesses to use during breaks and to wait to be called to give evidence. Tea / Coffee will be supplied in the room or in a refreshment area near your room.
2. Lunch will not be provided for our witnesses however any lunch you buy can be refunded. A guidance document on how to claim is available.
3. Hearings are usually held in our offices in Cardiff, therefore, a café, bar or restaurant in the vicinity will be close by. Where a hearing is held in a venue with no facilities for food, we will provide lunch – we will let you know if lunch is provided before the hearing.
4. You may be giving evidence from our office in St Asaph, via a video link to the hearing in our office in Cardiff. When you arrive at our St Asaph office, someone from Social Care Wales, will meet you and take you to a room to wait until it is your turn to give evidence. Giving evidence by video link means you will see and hear the panel, and the others attending the hearing in Cardiff (or somewhere else), on a large TV screen. We will test the video link a few times before you give evidence to make sure it works.
5. Car parking, travel and subsistence costs and loss of earnings (if you are self-employed) will be refunded. A guidance document on how to claim is available.
6. The Presenter and the Fitness to Practise Officer (probably the people who interviewed you and asked you to give evidence), will explain the hearing process and what happens when you are giving evidence. When the panel is ready to hear your evidence the clerk will come to get you and ask if you would like to take the Oath and swear on a holy book (such as the Bible), or affirm (i.e. not swear on a holy book).
7. When it is your turn to give evidence, the Clerk will come to get you and take you to the hearing room.
8. When you are in the hearing room and ready to give evidence, the Chair will introduce the panel members, explain the process of questioning, you will take your Oath/affirmation and then the Presenter will start asking you questions.
9. If you wear reading glasses, please bring them with you to the hearing, as you may be asked to read your statement and other documents out loud. When giving evidence, please remember to take your time. If you are likely to find it difficult to read out loud this is not a problem, just tell the Presenter before you give evidence.
10. If you would like to give evidence in Welsh or any other language, please let us know as soon as possible before the hearing is held
11. You can ask for a break while giving evidence at any time.
12. The Fitness to Practise Officer or the Presenter will have given you a time when you will likely give your evidence to the panel, however, if the hearing is running late, this time may be changed. We will make sure you are told if the hearing is running late, and possibly contact you before you arrive at the hearing venue so that you are not kept waiting too long.
13. Witnesses who have given evidence should not speak to other witnesses who have not yet given evidence, as it may affect the case. After giving evidence at a public hearing, you may stay in the hearing room to observe the remainder of the hearing if you want to.
14. While the panel is making decisions, the panel will do their best to give an indication of how long they will take, but at times, decisions may take longer than expected. The Clerk will keep everyone updated as much as possible.
15. While the panel is making decisions or taking breaks, you may leave the venue, however, you should make sure the Clerk knows where you are and is able to contact you quickly, as the panel may return to the hearing room sooner than expected.
16. Our offices in Cardiff and St Asaph and most venues we use to hold hearings have Wi-fi (occasionally subject to charge).

*Thank you very much for your time and agreeing to give evidence*

*If you would like to know more about the hearing and in particular giving evidence please watch our video:*

*https://socialcare.wales/fitness-to-practise/hearings-under-the-fitness-to-practise-2017-rules*

***If you have any questions about giving evidence, please contact us on: 029 20780 640 or speak to the Fitness to Practise Officer who has been dealing with the case***