



West Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Third Party Interviews and Court Appearance Policy



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Revision and Signoff Sheet

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Comments
03/10/2013	Pam Imeson	1.0	No changes. New template
11/07/2014	Pam Imeson	2.0	Inclusion of Witness Statement Reference
17/01/2019	Beverley Croft-Nicholson	3.0	Review wording and update links
08/09/2022	Beverley Croft-Nicholson	4.0	Review of wording, links and accessibility
06/01/2026	Lyndsey Donbavand	5.0	Review of wording and inclusion of additional sub-headings. Transfer to new template

Reviewers

Name	Version Approved	Position	Organisation	Date
Alison Davey	2.0	CS Manager	WYFRS	11/07/2014
Alison Davey	3.0	CS Manager	WYFRS	17/01/2019
Alison Davey	4.0	CS Manager	WYFRS	08/09/2022
Alison Davey	5.0	Head of Corporate Services	WYFRS	23/01/2026

Distribution

Name	Position	Organisation
All staff		WYFRS

Equality Impact Assessment

Are the recommendations within this report subject to Equality Impact Assessment as outlined in the EIA guidance? No

[\(EIA Template and Guidance\)](#)

Date EIA Completed: 19/02/2026

Date EIA Approved:

The EIA is available on request from the report author or from diversity.inclusion@westyorksfire.gov.uk

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Introduction

Third Party interviews may be requested by external organisations such as the Police, Insurance Companies or other interested parties. This policy sets out the procedures for managing such requests, as well as the arrangements for court appearances involving uniformed personnel.

For operationally based cases, administration and guidance will be the responsibility of Corporate Services and the Nominated Officer respectively. All other cases will be referred to the Legal Administrative Officer to determine an appropriate officer to advise.

Where operational personnel have been requested by West Yorkshire Police to supply a witness statement following an incident, they must seek support from a Fire Investigation Officer. Further guidance on this process is provided within the Fire Investigation Policy.

Third Party Interviews

Request Process

- Before a third party interview involving uniformed personnel takes place, any interested party must make the initial request through Corporate Services.
- If a request is deemed urgent and out of hours, the 1st Call Group Manager (GM) should deal with the request ensuring that Corporate Services are notified of the details at the first opportunity.

Appointment of a Nominated Officer

- For all interviews, Corporate Services, or the 1st Call Group Manager (GM), will appoint an FDS Officer (the Nominated Officer) to offer advice/guidance to the interviewee prior to the interview taking place.
- The Nominated Officer will normally be the local Station Manager. If not available, Corporate Services or the First Call GM will appoint an alternative officer.

Supervision of Interviews

- When Firefighters and/or Crew Managers are being interviewed, the Watch Manager will supervise the interview.
- Watch Managers and above will be interviewed unsupervised unless:
 - the individual requests support, or
 - supervision is appropriate due to the nature of the incident, in which case the Nominated Officer will attend.

Arranging the Interview

- Corporate Services will provide all necessary information and documentation for interviews to the interviewee

- The interviewee is responsible for contacting the third party and scheduling the interview at a time when their work rota allows.

Statements

- Except for the police, no statements should be signed by the interviewee at this stage of the proceedings.
- Police statements may be signed at the time of the interview, however:
 - Only the station address and telephone number should be provided; not home address and telephone numbers.
 - The police should be asked to forward a copy of the statement directly to the interviewee, who is responsible for retaining the document for reference.

Statements Provided Without an Interview

- Where the police request a written statement to be provided, without an interview, advice must be obtained from Fire Investigation who will assist the interviewee and ensure that the format and content is correct before submission.

Statements for Other Agencies

- For interviews with other agencies - three copies of the statement must be provided by the interviewer.
- These must be checked by the Watch Manager or Nominated Officer (as appropriate) prior to signing by the interviewee.

Post Interview Requirements

- Following completion of the interview, the interviewee or Nominated Officer must inform Corporate Services with details of the interview (date, time, duration, etc.).
- This information enables Corporate Services to apply the appropriate charge in line with the Third Party Interview Charging Policy (See [Publication Scheme | West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service \(wyfs.co.uk\)](https://www.wyfs.co.uk) under the 'Our policies and procedures' tab; 'Charging regimes and policies' heading: Third Party Interview Charges).

Court Attendances by Uniformed Personnel

Notification and Initial Contact

- Any uniformed personnel receiving notification to attend court to provide evidence as a witness should, in the first instance, contact Corporate Services.

Appointment of a Nominated Officer

- For all court attendances, Corporate Services will nominate an FDS officer (the Nominated Officer) to provide advice/guidance to the witness prior to the court appearance. Advice

and information on attending court, dress code, etc. is available in Section 4 of this document.

- The Nominated Officer will normally be the local Station Manager. If not available, Corporate Services or First Call Group Manager (GM) will appoint an alternative officer.

Attendance and Support

- When Firefighters and/or Crew Managers are required to attend Court, the Nominated Officer will also attend to observe proceedings and offer support and guidance, as necessary.
- Watch Managers and above will attend Court unsupervised unless:
 - they request support, or
 - supervision is appropriate due to the nature of the incident, in which case the Nominated Officer will also attend.

Following Court Attendance

- Following attendance at Court, the Nominated Officer will:
 - arrange a debrief with the witness, and
 - submit a brief report to Corporate Services.
- Where necessary, the Nominated Officer should consult with a Fire Investigation Officer regarding the court procedure/protocol.

Court Attendance – Aide Memoire

Nominated Officer

- A Station Manager will be assigned as the point of contact for advice, support and guidance.

Dress Code

- **Operational personnel** should wear Undress Uniform (minus cap)
- **Non-operational personnel** should wear appropriate smart attire, such as suit, shirt and tie

On arrival at Court

- Parking is usually available near the Courthouse – it may be possible to park at the nearest fire station and walk to the Courthouse
- You will need to pass through security and search routines prior to entry
- Report to Reception or the Court Usher (typically identifiable by a black gown)
- Be prepared for significant waiting times before you give evidence

Documents required

- Police statement, fire report or other relevant documentation.

Court Procedure

- You may be able to view an empty Courthouse prior to commencement of the hearing – ask the Court Usher
- You can sit in the public gallery and observe other cases whilst waiting for your case to commence – inform the Court Usher where you are
- When called, you will be asked to stand in the witness box and take an oath
- Examination will proceed as follows:
 1. Questions from the prosecution
 2. Questions from the defence
 3. Possible further questions from the prosecution
- Advise the Court Usher if you do not wish to give your home address in open court and use the fire station address instead

Addressing the Magistrate or Judge

- Magistrates Court – the Magistrate should be referred to as ‘*Sir*’ or ‘*Madam*’
- Crown Court – the Judge should be referred to as ‘*Your Honour*’

Expenses

- A claim can be made for travelling expenses to the Court, parking, meals, etc. - ask court staff for a claim form

Leaving Court

- Do not leave the Courthouse until you are formally advised that you are no longer required
- You can remain in the public gallery to observe the remainder of the case if you wish

Further Guidance

- Contact Corporate Services at FSHQ – Telephone: 01274 682311, Email: corporate.services@westyorksfire.gov.uk

How this policy supports our values

WYFRS Core Values

- **Teamwork:** We recognise everyone’s strengths and contributions, working effectively as one team.
- **Integrity:** We are trustworthy, act ethically, treating each other with dignity and respect.
- **Learning:** We learn all the time; we share knowledge and experiences, celebrating success.
- **Responsibility:** We are responsible, work positively and take ownership of the work we do.
- **Communication:** We share clear information, in ways everyone understands, having open discussions.

Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services – our five ethical principles:



- **Putting our communities first:** We put the interests of the public, the community, and service users first.
- **Integrity:** We act with integrity including being open, honest, and consistent in everything that we do.
- **Dignity and respect:** We treat people with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.
- **Leadership:** We are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.
- **Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI):** We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI, both within the FRS and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed as required but at least every three years.

Document Properties

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