

NORTHERN IRELAND REGISTERED INTERMEDIARIES

Communication Specialists in the Criminal Justice System

WHAT IS A REGISTERED INTERMEDIARY (RI)?

- There are currently 28 RIs – professionals with specialist skills in communication.
- RIs typically come from a range of backgrounds such as social work and speech and language therapy.
- They assist those with significant communication difficulties to give their best evidence to the police or at court.
- The communication difficulty could be due to a learning disability, autistic spectrum disorder, or because of very young age (among others).
- RIs are impartial, neutral and transparent in what they do – their paramount duty is to the Court.

WHAT DOES THE RI DO?

- Assesses the vulnerable person's communication abilities and needs, including whether they have the ability to communicate their evidence at police interview and court.
- Ascertains if the vulnerable person truly needs a Registered Intermediary.
- Considers if the vulnerable person would be able to give evidence at all, even with their assistance.
- Advises on communication during the police interview and at court.
- Assists with communication when the witness/defendant is giving evidence.
- Writes a report for court, making recommendations, about the communication needs of the witness/defendant.
- Is involved in a Ground Rules Hearing at court to discuss and agree the recommendations in their court report.

WHO HAS THE SCHEME HELPED?

- Over 5,000 requests for Registered Intermediaries to date.
- Currently around 800 – 900 requests per year.
- Around 83% of requests come from PSNI, the remainder from defence solicitors and the Public Prosecution Service.
- 73% of cases relate to young age, learning disability and autism.
- The youngest person assisted by an RI to give evidence has been aged one, the oldest 101.
- Two thirds of cases involve a child (40% of cases involve someone under 11).
- 81% of cases relate to sexual offences, assault or cruelty.
- 80% of cases involve victims and witnesses.
- 20% of cases involve suspects and defendants.

BECOMING A REGISTERED INTERMEDIARY

Have you the skills and experience to:

- assess an individual's communication abilities;
- advise the police, court and advocates on how best an individual can be questioned; and
- assist vulnerable individuals to communicate effectively in giving evidence.

IF SO, APPLY TO BECOME A NORTHERN IRELAND REGISTERED INTERMEDIARY (closing date for applications 17th December 2021)

For more information:

Website: www.justice-ni.gov.uk/ri

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P.T.O



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dí agus Cirt
Máinnystrie o tha Laa

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HOW HAS THE SCHEME BEEN RECEIVED?

The Lord Chief Justice “The feedback from my judicial colleagues in regard to this Scheme was very positive. We fully support the use of RI’s in Northern Ireland”.

Registered Intermediary “Overall, this has been a great Scheme to be involved in and a lot of vulnerable people have been supported to give evidence, who previously would have been unable to do so”.

Registered Intermediary “I think that this is the most challenging job I have done but yet it is a job that I really enjoy and get a lot of satisfaction out of”.

Defence Solicitor “The service provided by the RI is worthy of the highest commendation”.

Defence Solicitor “The RI was extremely flexible and the service very efficient”.

Public Prosecution Service “An otherwise impossible prosecution was proceeded with through the court”.

Police officer “The interview proceeded in a way that the suspect could understand and allowed him to give an account that he possibly would not have been able to before”.

Police Officer “We achieved the best evidence possible from an individual who had very little communication and who would not have been able to be heard without the RI”.

Police officer “The RI is a wonderful addition to providing a fair and equitable criminal justice system”.

Police officer “The RI assisted me greatly to enable me to gain a free flowing account from very young children”.

Police officer “We got a statement of complaint; the assistance from the RI was vital in this”.

Police Officer “Fantastic suggestions by RI in communicating with the child. Really helpful during interview”.



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