

# Victim Support at Court

## THE IRISH MODEL

19 September 2022



Irish Council for  
**Civil Liberties**

# Agenda

1. **Introducing Victim Support at Court (V-SAC)**
2. **Video**
3. **Role of the volunteer**
4. **Benefits for victims**
5. **Benefits for police and lawyers**
6. **EU Directive**



# V-SAC, Victim Support at Court

1. Only service in Ireland dedicated solely to court accompaniment
2. Volunteer-led and focused: 60+ fully trained volunteers
3. Permanent presence in the Dublin's Criminal Courts of Justice; Operating in East and South Easts; Currently expanding into the rest of the country
4. Also provides pre-trial court visits, Victim Support Area and referral to other services



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Rjq0LgV1xk>

## Victims supported in...

**2021: 1271**

**2020: 1096**

**2019: 1482**



# Role of the volunteer

1. Pre-trial visits where the layout of the courtroom is explained and show them the Victim Support Area

***Innovative:*** remotely during the pandemic

2. Ensure the victims, prosecution witnesses and their family/friends are made as comfortable as possible in the Victim Support Area

***Innovative:*** Kitchen for victims use, victims don't have to fear bumping into accused in the café.



# Benefits for victims

1. Free, confidential and non-judgemental service
2. Opportunity to see the courtroom beforehand
3. Trained independent volunteer with them in court
4. Access to victim support area
5. Information about additional services/supports available post-trial
6. V-SAC coordinate with police and lawyers to make things run as smoothly as possible for the victims throughout the trial



# Benefits for lawyers and police

1. **V-SAC can facilitate consultations with victims and the legal teams, where possible, which is less formal than court meeting rooms**
2. **Lawyers and police know where the victim is, if not in court, and if needed can contact V-SAC when the victim is required to attend court**
3. **Lawyers can concentrate on their role when at court, knowing the victim is being looked after at all times by a trained volunteer in a separate area away from the public**



# EU Directive

**Article 8(1)** ‘access to confidential victim support services, free of charge, acting in the interests of the victims before, during and for an appropriate time after criminal proceedings.’

**Recital 53** “ Member States should be encouraged to introduce, especially in relation to court buildings and police stations, feasible and practical measures enabling the facilities to include amenities such as separate entrances and waiting areas for victims.”



For more information on V-SAC:

See [www.vsac.ie](http://www.vsac.ie) or contact  
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Thank you!

