

# **Intimidated Witness Training**

## **Final Training Assessment**



August 2008

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## Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
1. Introduction .....	3
1.1 Background .....	3
1.2 Intimidated witness training session.....	4
2. Methodology.....	5
2.1 Trainee questionnaires.....	5
2.2 Observations .....	5
2.3 Post training interviews.....	5
2.4 Comparison between first, second and third training sessions.....	5
3. Findings.....	6
3.1 Third training session .....	6
3.1.1 Observations .....	6
3.1.2 Questionnaire analysis .....	9
3.1.3 Interviews.....	10
3.1.4 Summary of the third training session .....	12
3.2 Assessment of the pilot training programme.....	12
3.2.1 Characteristics of training programme participants .....	13
3.2.2 Analyses of training sessions two and three.....	13
3.2.3 Outcomes of the modified training session compared to those of the original session.....	15
3.2.4 Comparison of observations in first and third training session .....	16
3.2.5 Summary of interviews following first and third training session .....	17
4. Summary and conclusions.....	18
5. Recommendations .....	18
6. References .....	19

## **Acknowledgements**

The authors of this report would like to thank all those who attended the training session and completed questionnaires, and especially those who then gave their time to be interviewed. We would also like to thank course trainers Pat Johnstone and Wendy Alfonso, course facilitator, Mervyn Parry, as well as staff at the Breckfield Centre.

## I. Introduction

Witness intimidation can have devastating effects on the physical and psychological well being of victims and their families. It can also prevent individuals from reporting crime and can result in victims retracting statements once they are involved in the criminal justice system, which may result in a case being dropped. In order to reduce witness intimidation and encourage witnesses to report crimes and give evidence, the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) is delivering a work programme which aims to assist agencies in identifying and supporting intimidated witnesses. A key element of this programme is the development and implementation of the Making WAVES<sup>1</sup> project in Breckfield, Liverpool. Making WAVES aims to facilitate the work of the police and other agencies in identifying and supporting intimidated witnesses (Anderson et al., 2008). One aspect of this initiative is the development of a training programme that is being piloted and delivered to local agencies to help them identify intimidated witnesses and support them appropriately. Developed for frontline staff, the pilot training programme aims to:

- Inform both statutory and voluntary organisations of the support needs of intimidated witnesses;
- Develop local networks and build partnerships to enable comprehensive support systems for witnesses to be put in place; and,
- Develop a framework for identifying and standardising the response/referral mechanism.

In order to evaluate the Making WAVES pilot training programme, the OCJR has commissioned the Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University, to assess the training programme to inform and develop the sessions both locally and nationally. This report provides assessment of the third training session held in July 2008, along with a final assessment of the three intimidated witness pilot training sessions held as part of the Making WAVES project in October 2007, March 2008 and July 2008. The aim of this report is to provide feedback to the trainers and project funders to inform further development of the intimidated witness training.

### I.1 Background

Witness intimidation is associated with any action that is intended to prevent a witness from reporting a crime or giving evidence in court (Criminal Justice System, 2008). Intimidation may include the use of verbal threats and abuse, property damage or physical violence and the severity of intimidation can vary considerably (Box 1). Intimidation can be categorised into three main types, including low-level harassment, non life threatening but serious intimidation and life threatening intimidation (Office for Criminal Justice Reform, 2006a). The burden of witness intimidation does not only fall on the witness but also on their families and friends, other witnesses, communities and services.

Witness intimidation often goes unreported, and as a consequence can continue or worsen. Nationally, intimidation is a factor in almost

#### **Box 1: Home Office definition of witness intimidation**

“Witness intimidation may involve threats to harm someone, acts to harm them, physical and financial harm; and acts and threats against a third party (such as a relative of the witness), with the purpose of deterring the witness from reporting the crime in the first instance or deterring them from giving evidence in court.”

(Home Office, 1998).

<sup>1</sup> WAVES - Witness and Victim Encouragement and Support.

one in ten reported crimes (Tarling et al., 2000). However, in the Breckfield area of Liverpool, research has found that 70% of residents who had been the victim of a crime in the past six months had also been intimidated. Two-thirds (65%) stated that a family member had been intimidated as well (Anderson et al., 2008). Often, crimes are never reported to police for a number of reasons, including: fear of revenge attacks and intimidation; the perception that authorities will not do anything; and lack of witness support (Anderson et al., 2008; Kershaw et al., 2008). Failure to report crime means it is impossible to determine the true nature of crime and intimidation.

Witness intimidation can occur at any point of the witness pathway and subsequently support should be available throughout (for example, from the onset of a crime to post-trial). Input from a range of services including housing organisations, Victim Support, Witness Care Units, police, fire, social services, voluntary organisations, and local anti-social behaviour units, for example, are not only essential for providing a network of support to witnesses at all stages of the witness pathway, but also for being an initial point of contact (Anderson and Hughes, 2007). The Making WAVES pilot training programme aims to help to set a standard response and referral mechanism for those working with intimidated witnesses, ensuring adequate and consistent support is accessible to witnesses despite which agency they contact, and at all stages of the witness pathway.

## **1.2 Intimidated witness training session**

In July 2007, the Making WAVES project was set up in Breckfield, Liverpool, with the aim of facilitating the cohesion of local support services in identifying and supporting intimidated witnesses and to assist the reporting of crimes to a variety of agencies. To enable this, a training programme was developed and piloted with the aim of providing local agencies with the knowledge and skills to effectively address the needs of intimidated witnesses. Representatives from agencies and organisations throughout Breckfield and the wider Liverpool area were invited to take part, with the first training session taking place in October 2007. Sessions were led by an experienced training consultant employed by the OCJR and a second trainer from the Making WAVES project was also in attendance to provide another level of local expertise to the trainees.

As well as providing information on the specific support needs of intimidated witnesses and the agencies involved in supporting them, the training sessions have also included use of specialist training materials, including the scorecard (Office for Criminal Justice Reform, 2006a) and the best practice guide (Office for Criminal Justice Reform, 2006b), which have been developed to provide a consistent level of support for all agencies involved with intimidated witnesses. It is hoped the scorecard will set a standard that is followed by all agencies, thereby ensuring adequate and relevant support is given, irrespective of which agency the witness is involved with. With the help of the scorecard and other training materials, it is hoped that the training session will help attendees to: recognise and assess levels of intimidation; promote better joint agency working; share community intelligence; encourage witnesses to come forward; and, build confidence and trust in the community.

## **2. Methodology**

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Three training sessions were held at the Breckfield Centre, in October 2007, March 2008 and July 2008. More than 30 representatives from local organisations and community groups attended the day-long pilot sessions. An interim report (Anderson and Whelan, 2007) has already been published following the first training session, and as a result, a number of changes have been implemented in subsequent training sessions. This section outlines the overall methodology for assessment, which is conducted in four stages.

### **2.1 Trainee questionnaires**

In each session, participants were asked to complete two questionnaires: one before the training session (pre) and one at the end of the day (post). These questionnaires explored participants': background; knowledge of actions to take when working with intimidated witnesses; experience of working with intimidated witnesses; levels of confidence in their ability to support intimidated witnesses; prior training; satisfaction with the course; and, recommendations for its improvement. The post questionnaire also asked participants to rate the level of usefulness of each section of the training day, with answers ranging from very poor to very good for content (quality and scope), relevance and delivery.

### **2.2 Observations**

Two researchers from the Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University, attended the first and third training sessions. Researchers completed an assessment form of the training throughout the day, making notes on aspects of each session, considering factors such as: group interaction; presentation and resource materials; discussion of relevant issues; and a general overview of the session.

### **2.3 Post training interviews**

To assess the impact of the training on working practices, seven participants were interviewed in the weeks following the first and third training session (four after the first and three after the third). Interviews were semi-structured and assessed: perceptions of the training session, including content; any improvements that could be made; and the impact the training had on their knowledge, understanding and working practices in relation to witness intimidation. Interviews lasted between ten and 30 minutes and were conducted face-to-face (4) and via telephone (2). Due to work commitments, one attendee completed an electronic version of the interview schedule and returned it via email.

### **2.4 Comparison between first, second and third training sessions**

To determine the effectiveness of the pilot training sessions, all three sessions have been analysed using pre and post training questionnaires, observations from the first and third training sessions, and interviews following the first and third session.

### **3. Findings**

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#### **3.1 Third training session**

This section analyses the third training session held in July 2008, including observations, questionnaires and interviews.

##### **3.1.1 Observations**

###### ***Location and delivery***

The training sessions were held over a six-hour period in a private training room at the Breckfield Centre. Based in the heart of the Breckfield community, this venue provides a neutral setting in which the multi-agency training could be delivered, ensuring that no single agency was viewed as being the main contributor. It also helps to place the training into context, as it is delivered centrally in the community where the majority of agencies attending the course operate. The training room layout was appropriate for the session, providing four tables for groups of trainees to sit around (six trainees attended). However, the room was set out for 20 people, and the researchers believe that at full capacity, in this venue, the room would have been uncomfortable, and therefore should preferably be set out for 15 trainees and two trainers.

Refreshments were made available to trainees throughout the day. At break sessions, attendees grouped around one table to chat with the trainers. The atmosphere was relaxed, and the trainers developed a good rapport with those attending. To aid discussion at the start of the day, trainees were regrouped, ensuring that a range of agencies were sat around each table. This allowed individuals to meet people working in a similar field from other organisations and to ensure a broader context of discussion throughout the sessions.

The training session was coordinated by two trainers; a consultant working for the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR), and the head of the Witness Protection Unit within Merseyside Police, who is a Making WAVES steering group member. The use of a trainer with good knowledge of local issues and how agencies work together in the area was beneficial as they were able to relate the training to local situations and develop discussions based on local facts. They were also invaluable in providing detailed information on the law, current practice regarding intimidated and vulnerable witnesses and any future developments/initiatives that were relevant to the training group, such as anonymity in court cases. Furthermore, the Making WAVES trainer was known to a number of the participants, allowing them to talk more informally and openly. Both facilitators were extremely professional yet relaxed in their approach to the training. Their vast knowledge of issues facing intimidated witnesses was beneficial to the attendees and on more than one occasion, they were able to offer valuable insight into procedures and practices. Another benefit of the day is that the course is flexible in its length, and each section could easily be shortened or lengthened based on attendees' needs.

###### **Content**

The third training session had a clear outline and structure. As a result of recommendations made following the initial session held in October 2007 (Anderson and Whelan, 2007), the aims and objectives of the training session were displayed via Powerpoint and included:

- Recognising and evaluating intimidation;
- Better joint agency working;
- Sharing community intelligence;

- Encouraging witnesses to come forward; and,
- Building confidence and trust in the community.

The training day was divided into six key sections (see Box 2). The first section provided a brief introduction on who the trainers were, the purpose of the training session, and background information on the Making WAVES project and why it is being implemented in the Breckfield area of Liverpool. The main facilitator provided information on how the work of the OCJR had developed over the past four years and subsequently how and why the Making WAVES project and the training session was developed. It was highlighted that the training course was the first of its kind and trainers were asked to provide feedback at the end of the session on how it could be improved (to the trainers and also via the feedback questionnaires used as part of this assessment). A definition of witness intimidation was provided. The trainers highlighted that the scorecard (explained in the next paragraph) was important to ensuring an adequate multi-agency response for the victim/witness to ensure that they are supported throughout the witness pathway. This led to a discussion on agency perceptions and in groups, attendees were asked to write down the barriers and motivators for stepping forward as a witness to a crime. This section provided a good forum for participant discussion on the relevant support systems available to witnesses. It was seen as a good starting point for the training day as it encouraged group discussion with trainees asked to think about the issues from both their personal experience and that of other organisations. This was useful, particularly as trainees came from a range of backgrounds, and therefore had different experiences, views and knowledge of the issues concerning intimidated witnesses.

After a coffee break, the group were introduced to the scorecard. This session was led by the second trainer, who had many years' service in Merseyside police. The trainer explained that the scorecard has been developed as a result of research, and in the Merseyside area it is hoped it will be used by all agencies to provide consistency when dealing with intimidated witnesses, irrespective of which agency they approach or where they live. The scorecard uses a 1-20 ranking (low, medium to high) to risk assess a witness, while outlining subsequent support needs such as special measures or referral to another agency. The trainer used this opportunity to go into greater detail regarding many of the measures in place to support witnesses, both in the community, their homes and throughout the criminal justice system, including target hardening; and in some cases, anonymity in court. This provided an excellent opportunity for attendees who were not familiar with either police or court processes to understand what support is available to intimidated witnesses and the pathways they follow through the legal system. Whilst discussing the level of intimidation, groups were asked to consider if there was anything missing off the scorecard that should be included to aid agency-wide use.

#### **Box 2: Training session outline**

1. Introduction
2. Section 1: Perceptions, definitions, what is witness intimidation and pros and cons of being a witness;
3. Section 2: Manual, scorecard, best practice guide and witness journey;
4. Section 3: Case study one, group session and discussion;
5. Section 4: Case study two, group session and discussion;
6. Section 5: Review of case studies;
7. Section 6: Review of sessions, lessons learnt and question and answers; and,
8. Summing up and closure.

Following this, attendees were asked to chart on paper the witness pathway, including what happens, which agencies are involved, and why. Again within groups, discussion was abundant and the trainer offered advice to each group throughout this task. Using the information learnt from the witness journey pathway and the scorecard, groups were then asked to consider two real life case studies involving intimidated witnesses (one presented



before lunch and the second after). The first scenario was outlined briefly and displayed in Powerpoint via a projector and the groups were asked to consider what number ranking the individual should be given on the scorecard according to their circumstances. After around half an hour of discussion the groups shared their scores and explained how they had arrived at the rating. This session was useful as it enabled attendees to gain first hand experience of the scorecard and use it in an actual scenario. As there were only three agencies represented in each group the trainers were able to fill in the gaps and explain other agencies' involvement in the given scenario. The case studies helped to reinforce the importance of the scorecard and the role that other agencies play in supporting the witness. Although this training group was quite small, this did not impede on the session, as the trainers' experience both of multi-agency working and the Breckfield area enabled them to educate attendees on ongoing work they may have been previously unaware of.

During this section, one trainee stated that it would be good to hold multi-agency meetings with individual witnesses and all relevant agencies who would be able to explain their roles and the level of support they are able to offer. This was deemed important in making all involved aware of the steps that were being taken to protect the witness, and would provide the opportunity to put 'names to faces' and forge good working relationships. It was agreed that this would also help with the flow of information between agencies while helping build witness confidence. Similar meetings exist as part of the Making WAVES initiative, and whilst this was not alluded to, the police trainer did provide information on a new intimidated witness referral system that is in the processes of being developed in Merseyside. Here, three extra staff have subsequently been asked to coordinate follow-ups with witnesses and to help build up their confidence with the police and the criminal justice system generally.

The final section of the training wrapped up what had been learnt throughout the day. It was agreed that ongoing multi-agency working is important, and is already common practice, helping to establish vital community relationships between agencies, and also with the community itself. A joined up approach with strong support networks should encourage witnesses to come forward while ensuring they are adequately supported according to their specific needs. Communication was also recognised as invaluable, both for agencies and organisations involved in the processes, but also for the individual. The attendees' overall verdict of the scorecard was that it was extremely useful and that the supporting materials (working with intimidated witnesses and the best practice guide for tackling intimidated witnesses) were both beneficial and invaluable in outlining the course of action. It was suggested that the use of the scorecard could be broadened out to include more agencies, such as the fire service.

### ***Trainer and group interaction***

There was excellent communication between the trainers and trainees as well as between the group members themselves. The trainers were knowledgeable and informal, yet professional in their manner. They brought invaluable expertise to the group: one as a training consultant and the other with their local work in Breckfield and both had a long history of working with intimidated witnesses. Regrouping attendees so that they were not necessarily seated by their colleagues allowed for wider discussion, whilst forging new working relationships between attendees.

### ***Training materials***

A range of training materials were available during the training session, including paper, pencils and pens, which facilitated group work. Attendees were also given copies of the scorecard and the best practice guide and other supporting materials beforehand to ensure they were readily at hand during the relevant sections, as well as being an invaluable reference guide after the course.

### 3.1.2 Questionnaire analysis

Six local community workers attended the third intimidated witness training session, representing Riverside Housing Association, Breckfield and North Everton Neighbourhood Council, Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. Attendees were asked to fill in two questionnaires, one before the session started, and another immediately afterwards. Five returned the first questionnaire and six the second. Attendees had a breadth of experience, with three having worked in their field for between six and ten years. Four had been in post and worked in the Breckfield area between three and ten years and one less than a year. Prior to this training session, most attendees (n=4) had not received any previous training in working with intimidated witnesses and one had been briefed as part of their initial police training six years ago. Most came in contact with intimidated witnesses on a weekly basis (n=4), and one daily.

Respondents were initially asked what they hoped to learn from the training day. Responses included:

- What support is available for intimidated witnesses from a range of agencies;
- What information to provide to intimidated witnesses;
- How to identify an intimidated witness; and,
- The issues faced by intimidated witnesses.

Prior to the training, attendees were asked to rate their confidence and knowledge on a number of issues relating to intimidated witnesses. When asked about their ability to identify an intimidated witness, two stated they were quite confident, two were neither confident nor not confident and one was not very confident. Confidence in supporting intimidated witnesses was mainly neither confident nor not confident (n=4). Two attendees were quite confident in their ability at providing guidance to colleagues working with intimidated witnesses, while two were not very confident and one was neither confident nor not confident. When rating knowledge of the actions to take if identifying an intimidated witness and knowledge of the issues and support needs of intimidated witnesses, three stated neither good nor poor and two quite good in each question. When comparing responses following the training session, all attendees in each category stated that they were now very or quite confident/knowledgeable.

The first part of the post questionnaire asked attendees to rate the content (quality and scope), relevance and delivery of each section of the training. Section 1 (perceptions, definitions, what is witness intimidation and pros and cons of being a witness) was reported as very good by all attendees. Very good responses were also given for section 2 (manual and scorecard), section 3 and 4 (case studies and group discussion), and section 5 (review of case studies). For section 6 (review of sessions, lessons learnt and questions and answers), all responders agreed that content (quality), relevance and delivery was very good. For its content (scope) this was rated as very good by four attendees and quite good by one. Overall, there were very positive responses to the training session, reflected in the attendees' ratings and comments given in the post questionnaires.

*“Enjoyable. I learnt what other agencies provide.”*

*“The scorecard is a great tool and I will definitely be using it and encourage my colleagues to use it too.”*

*“The case studies were great, help to place scorecard into context.”*

*“Allowed information from other agencies to be discussed.”*

*“Excellent course.”*

### **3.1.3 Interviews**

This section summarises interviews conducted with attendees three weeks after the training session. Interview questions included: information on their role; level of involvement with intimidated witnesses; and views on the training session including aspects missing from the session, what they had learnt, and thoughts on multi-agency working.

#### **Contact with intimidated witnesses**

All three interviewees regularly came into contact with intimidated witnesses, both directly and indirectly through the agency they work for and their role specifically. All those interviewed worked with intimidated witnesses, on a range of levels including: face-to-face contact for the purposes of interviewing and taking statements; providing support; making referrals onto other agencies; conducting risk assessments; and providing at-home support as well as safety checks.

#### **Benefits of the training session**

Of those interviewed, all had received no prior training regarding intimidated witnesses and therefore, they deemed this course as important to understanding more about the needs and support networks available for intimidated witnesses. Interviewees highlighted that the most positive aspect of the training session was the opportunity to meet representatives from a range of agencies, and to learn more about their roles and interaction with intimidated witnesses. Interviewees stated that group work facilitated open discussions, providing valuable insights into individuals' work and involvement with intimidated witnesses. One individual, an anti-social behaviour (ASB) officer with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, was able to offer insight to the trainees on the role the fire service has in protecting intimidated witnesses in their homes, as well as providing follow-up contact for repeat callers to the service. Many of those attending were unaware of the fire service's role in supporting intimidated witnesses and this knowledge was seen as valuable by interviewees. The day also provided an opportunity for agencies to share personal experiences, both during breaks and group discussions to gain an even deeper understanding of agencies' involvement with intimidated witnesses. Communication was stated as important to all interviewees and an integral part of multi-agency working. The networking attendees had gained as a result of the course was also an integral part of interviewees' work.

*“Joint agency working is so efficient and effective. It's fantastic to work with so many people.”*

*“It was great to meet officers from the police and fire service ASB unit on the day and now I have a better understanding of the role of the fire service ASB unit.”*

*“It was fantastic – the course enables better communication cycles between agencies like the police.”*

*“You have to admit you don't know everything. The course gave us an opportunity to work with other people.”*

As a result of the training session, attendees were actively using what they had learnt in their working life. The use of training resources throughout the day was considered invaluable to understanding more about intimidated witnesses while facilitating discussions within groups and the session as a whole. The use of the scorecard was highlighted as excellent, with interviewees stating they had already used the card as part of their work since attending the training course.

*“Following the training and using the scorecard which I saw for the first time, I feel more confident in compiling my risk assessments.”*

Training was seen as essential to increase awareness and knowledge amongst attendees of the needs of intimidated witnesses, as well as highlighting local agencies which provide practical and emotional support to intimidated witnesses. All interviewees stated that the training session was necessary and had improved their awareness and knowledge of the needs of intimidated witnesses and how to support them.

*“It gave me a greater understanding and an insight into the needs of a witness and of all the emotions they go through and how much support they need even after the court case has concluded.”*

*“The training is important for Breckfield. It underlines what you are already aware of from your working experience and deals with the issue of intimidated witnesses practically.”*

*“It is absolutely necessary. The more people you have trained, the better level of understanding you have about it.”*

*“I think training is necessary to increase awareness and knowledge of the needs of vulnerable witnesses and to highlight the agencies that are out there to provide practical and emotional support.”*

Overall, interviewees stated that the training course was extremely beneficial to their working lives, providing an opportunity to learn more about the roles of others working in a similar field while understanding the diverse needs of intimidated witnesses.

*“I thought the training was excellent. The trainer was very knowledgeable and the information was given clearly and easy to understand.”*

*“No negatives, all positives. It made me aware of what to do when dealing with intimidated witnesses. It was quite informative.”*

*“It gave me an appreciation of what other people do.”*

*“It was very interesting and I learnt a lot.”*

### **Areas for improvement**

During the interviews, the only issue that emerged was with the number of attendees at the third training session. Six attended, although considerably more were invited to attend. While this had no effect on the quality of the discussion and group work, interviewees stated that more attendees representing a host of agencies would have been more beneficial to gain a broader understanding of the extent of support available through a range of individuals and agencies. One interviewee also stated it may be beneficial for members of the public/residents' groups to attend the training programme so that they can also be made aware of the work being done in their community to support intimidated witnesses (a member of a local residents' group attended the first pilot session). Regular involvement in training sessions may help reinforce what is available for witnesses while offering another level of community support for those who may still be apprehensive about coming forward to report crimes.

### **Ongoing issues specific to witness intimidation in the Breckfield area**

Attendees stated that witness intimidation was a current and very important issue affecting many peoples' lives in Breckfield, from the witness to their family, friends and wider

community. The Making WAVES project was seen as an important part of helping a community deal with the impacts of crime and disorder and the effects witness intimidation has. The training programme is therefore necessary to ensure that multi-agency working is encouraged and that the work of agencies is promoted to enable witnesses to be offered the highest level of support. Expansion of the project was supported by interviewees, so that other areas may be able to benefit from such a project.

*“In a time when society is getting out of hand with guns and knives you need to be able to help those most affected by this. [Making WAVES] should definitely be in other areas to make sure everyone has the same level of support and agencies available to them.”*

*“The training is important, not only for Breckfield... other areas who have problems with this. So it should be used anywhere it’s needed. Not just in particular hotspots, but people should be made aware of how to support intimidated witnesses.”*

### **3.1.4 Summary of the third training session**

Overall, interviewees said that the training course was excellent, and they were satisfied with the level of knowledge and information they had been given as part of the training session. The session was informative and much of what had been learnt was now being used by attendees in their work. As most attendees to the third session had received no prior training in issues relating to intimidated witnesses, this course was extremely beneficial to them. Those who worked regularly with intimidated witnesses stated that they had been able to expand their knowledge as well as learning how to use new tools such as the scorecard and best practice guide.

### **3.2 Assessment of the pilot training programme**

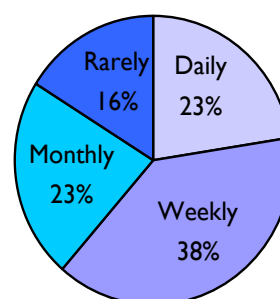
Following the first training session, a number of recommendations were made in order for the training to meet its aims and objectives (Anderson and Whelan, 2007). Comments were taken on board and as a result, a number of positive changes were incorporated and were reflected in the well run third session observed in July 2008 (see section 3.1). Changes to the training session included: displaying the aims and objectives of the training session via PowerPoint during the session; handing out literature such as the scorecard at the beginning of the session and incorporating its use into the training session; and using written case scenarios displayed via PowerPoint instead of ‘real-life’ actors (Anderson and Whelan, 2007). The following sections provide an overview of the characteristics of participants in all three training sessions. They then provide findings from the pre and post training questionnaires completed at the second and third training sessions, after modifications to the training programme had been implemented. These questionnaires show how the knowledge and confidence of participants in dealing with intimidated witnesses changed following completion of the training. Finally, to assess how the modifications to the training programme implemented after the first session have helped improve the training, the knowledge and confidence of participants that completed session one are compared with those of participants completing sessions two and three.

### 3.2.1 Characteristics of training programme participants

Across all three training sessions, 35 trainees completed the pre training questionnaire. Results show that agencies and organisations involved in the training were quite varied, with representatives from: Merseyside police (neighbourhood officers and Police Community Support Officers) (12); housing trusts and associations (4); Victim Support/Witness Services (4); Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (3); North Liverpool Community Justice Centre (2); and, other agencies (10) including Breckfield and North Everton Neighbourhood Council and Liverpool City Council. Roles were also quite varied with a range of responsibilities from volunteers and front line staff to managers and directors.

The level of experience also varied among attendees. Forty one per cent had worked in the field for more than six years, nearly a quarter (23%<sup>2</sup>) between three and five years, 14% between one and two years, and a quarter (23%) under a year. Forty percent had been in post for more than six years, almost a third (30%) between one and five years and almost a third (30%) for less than a year. Almost six in ten (59%) attendees had been working in the Breckfield area for less than twelve months, with 28% working there for one to five years and 13% for more than six years.

**Figure 1: Trainees' level of contact with intimidated witnesses**



The majority of attendees (80%) had not received training in witness intimidation issues prior to the Making WAVES course. Those who had received training (20%) stated they had done so as part of initial police training; and through court services and Victim Support. One police officer stated they had not received training but relied on years of practical experience as an officer. Six in ten (61%) attendees were in contact with intimidated witnesses on a daily or weekly basis, highlighting the need for them to be adequately trained in witness support needs, and ongoing issues concerning intimidated witnesses (Figure 1).

### 3.2.2 Analyses of training sessions two and three

To assess the impact of the training on participants' knowledge and confidence in dealing with intimidated witnesses, participants completed a questionnaire prior to the training sessions commencing, and a second questionnaire after they had been completed. Both questionnaires asked participants to rate their levels of knowledge and confidence on a range of issues regarding identifying and supporting intimidated witnesses. Changes in knowledge and confidence of those attending the first training session have already been reported (Anderson and Whelan, 2007). As the training session was modified after this first implementation, this section reports the findings from the latter two sessions only, which involved 21 participants.

When comparing responses to the same questions in the pre and post training questionnaires (Table 1), a marked shift in responses can be seen. Following the training sessions, there were increases in the proportion of trainees being very or quite confident in identifying, supporting and referring intimidated witnesses to other agencies. Similarly, more trainees stated that they were very or quite knowledgeable on a range of issues relating to

<sup>2</sup> Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

intimidated witnesses (Figure 2). In particular, all respondents stated that they were very or quite knowledgeable on what actions to take when identifying intimidated witnesses, suggesting that attendees had acquired the relevant knowledge and confidence to adequately support intimidated witnesses they come into contact with as part of their work.

**Table 1: Comparison of pre and post training questionnaires (sessions 2 and 3)<sup>3</sup>**

**1a) Participants' self-reported levels of knowledge of intimidated witness issues**

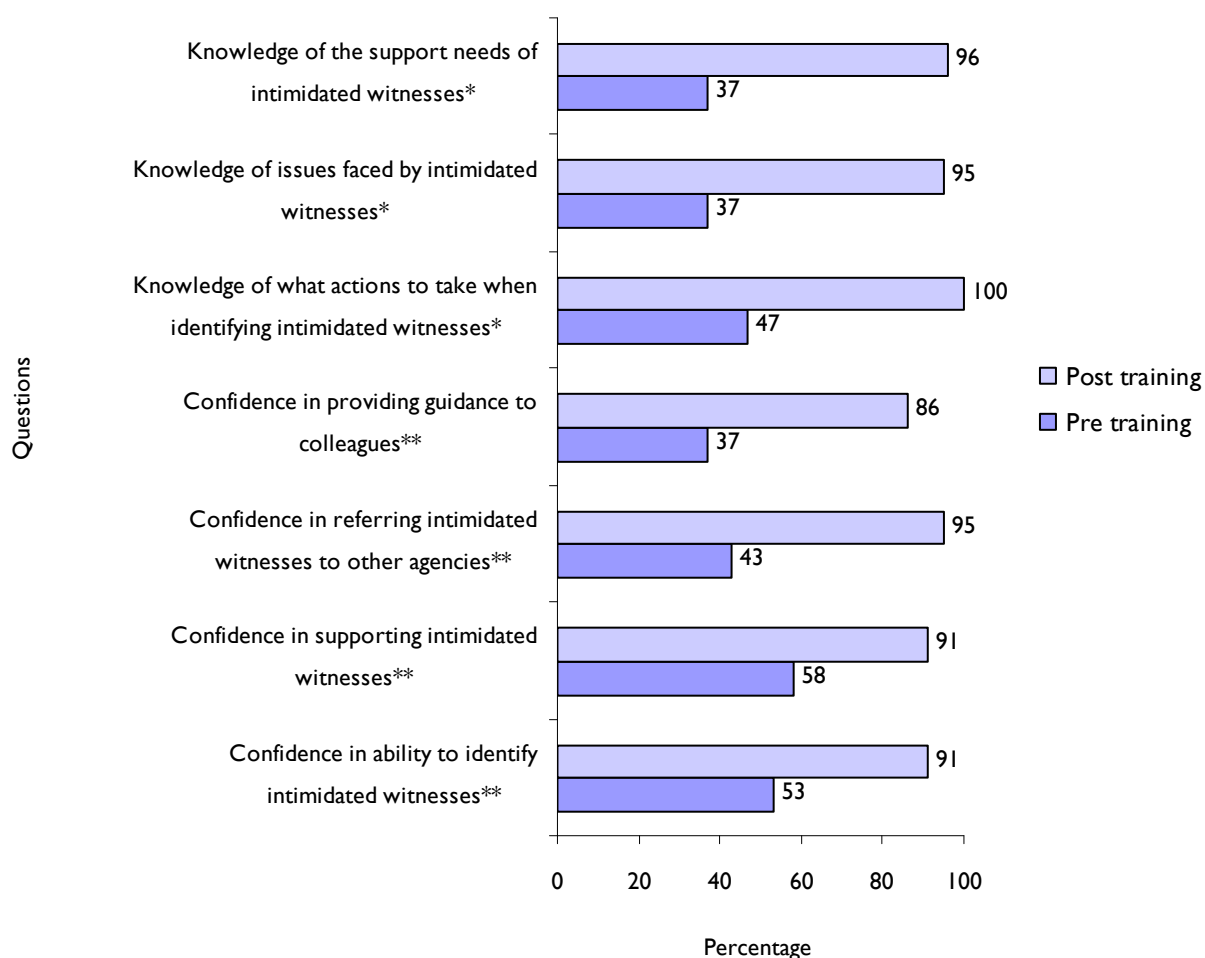
		<b>How would you rate your knowledge of:</b>					
<b>Question</b>		Actions to take when identifying an intimidated witness		Issues faced by intimidated witnesses		Support needs of intimidated witnesses	
	<b>Stage</b>	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
<b>Response</b>	Very good	5%	43%	5%	38%	5%	48%
	Quite good	42%	57%	32%	57%	32%	48%
	Neither good / poor	32%	0%	42%	5%	32%	5%
	Quite poor	16%	0%	11%	0%	21%	0%
	Very poor	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

**1b) Participants' confidence in dealing with intimidated witnesses**

		<b>How confident do you feel in:</b>							
<b>Question</b>		Identifying intimidated witnesses		Supporting intimidated witnesses		Referring intimidated witnesses onto other agencies		Providing guidance to colleagues working with intimidated witnesses	
	<b>Stage</b>	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
<b>Response</b>	Very confident	11%	48%	26%	29%	11%	38%	5%	38%
	Quite confident	42%	43%	32%	62%	32%	57%	32%	48%
	Neither confident / not confident	26%	10%	26%	10%	16%	5%	32%	14%
	Not very confident	16%	0%	11%	0%	42%	0%	21%	0%
	Not confident at all	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

<sup>3</sup> Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

**Figure 2: Percentage of participants reporting feeling knowledgeable and confident in dealing with intimidated witnesses before and after attending the training (sessions 2 and 3)**



\* Proportion reporting their knowledge as very or quite good

\*\* Proportion reporting feeling very or quite confident

### 3.2.3 Outcomes of the modified training session compared to those of the original session

In order to determine the impact of changes to the training programme implemented after the first session, analyses of post-training questionnaires from all three days have been compared. Fifteen people completed the post training questionnaire in sessions one and two, and six in the third. Using the same questions analysed in the previous section, Table 2 shows the self-reported knowledge and confidence of participants after completing session one, or sessions two and three.

Analyses show that for all questions in all sessions, most trainees stated that they were very or quite confident in identifying, supporting and referring intimidated witnesses, and supporting other colleagues following the training session. Furthermore, their knowledge on the issues faced by intimidated witnesses, their support needs and what actions to take was also primarily very or quite good following the training session (Table 2). However, for all questions, a greater proportion of the most positive responses (very good / very confident) were reported by participants attending sessions two and three. This suggests that the changes implemented to the training following the first session served to improve the training and its outcomes.



**Table 2: Comparison of post training questionnaire responses by session<sup>4</sup>**

**2a) Participants' self-reported levels of knowledge of intimidated witness issues after attending the training sessions**

		<b>How would you rate your knowledge of:</b>					
<b>Question</b>		Actions to take when identifying an intimidated witness		Issues faced by intimidated witnesses		Support needs of intimidated witnesses	
	<b>Session</b>	1	2 / 3	1	2 / 3	1	2 / 3
<b>Response</b>	Very good	8%	43%	25%	38%	18%	48%
	Quite good	75%	57%	75%	57%	64%	48%
	Neither good / poor	8%	0%	0%	5%	9%	5%
	Quite poor	8%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%
	Very poor	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

**1b) Participants' confidence in dealing with intimidated witnesses after attending the training sessions**

		<b>How confident do you feel in:</b>							
<b>Question</b>		Identifying intimidated witnesses		Supporting intimidated witnesses		Referring intimidated witnesses onto other agencies		Providing guidance to colleagues working with intimidated witnesses	
	<b>Session</b>	1	2 / 3	1	2 / 3	1	2 / 3	1	2 / 3
<b>Response</b>	Very confident	25%	48%	17%	29%	8%	38%	17%	38%
	Quite confident	67%	43%	59%	62%	83%	57%	59%	48%
	Neither confident / not confident	8%	10%	17%	10%	8%	5%	25%	14%
	Not very confident	0%	0%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Not confident at all	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

**3.2.4 Comparison of observations in first and third training session**

Observations from the first training session (Anderson and Whelan, 2007) highlighted that while the location, delivery, training materials and group interaction were all good, there were issues regarding the content, particularly regarding the lack of discussion about the training manuals, (including the best practice guide and scorecard) and the use of actors for

<sup>4</sup> Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

case scenarios. The length of the training session was also a problem as this cut down on the time that could be spent on important aspects such as the training manuals. However, a number of key components were changed for the subsequent sessions, resulting in a well coordinated and successful course. As discussed in section 3.1, attendees in the last pilot session (July 2008) rated the course content (quality), relevance and delivery as very good, and most (four out of five attendees) stated that the scope of the content was also very good.

### **3.2.5 Summary of interviews following first and third training session**

Following the first training session, interviewees stated that the most positive aspect of the training session was the opportunity to meet new people. Multi-agency working was seen as very important and vital to their roles. Areas for improvement from the first training session mainly centred around the use of actors in case scenarios, and the need for more detail on training manuals. Following the third training session, interviewees were more positive and could not list any negative aspects of the day. Integration of how to use the scorecard in the training session was extremely beneficial for attendees as this enabled them to gain practical experience of how to use it as part of their work. Satisfaction was high as a result of the third training session, and many of those who attended were using components of the training session in their subsequent work. All interviewees stated that the Making WAVES project is an important initiative in the Breckfield area.

#### **4. Summary and conclusions**

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The Making WAVES project aims to facilitate the work of the police and other agencies in identifying and supporting intimidated witnesses (Anderson et al., 2008). Through the development of the Making WAVES intimidated witness pilot training package, the project aimed to: provide local agencies with information on the support needs of intimidated witnesses; build local networks and promote multi-agency working; and, develop a framework of identifying and standardising response and referral processes. To inform the development of the training an initial report based on the first training session was produced and subsequently a number of changes were made to the training session. Data presented here show that these developments have helped the training to become very successful in fulfilling its objectives, particularly in promoting and developing local multi-agency working and developing a framework for identifying intimidated witnesses and standardising the response/referral mechanism. Assessment of the training sessions highlights how necessary this training course is to provide much needed information to local agency workers on supporting intimidated witnesses throughout the witness pathway. If future training sessions follow the format of the third session, the training course should provide great benefits in building multi-agency working in both Breckfield and the wider Liverpool area, and improving the level of support provided to intimidated witnesses. The following provides a list of key recommendations to ensure that the training sessions have the maximum impact, both on those attending, and in helping to make the Making WAVES project a success by having adequate support systems in place for intimidated witnesses.

#### **5. Recommendations**

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- The training sessions should continue to allow as many people as possible working with intimidated witnesses in the Breckfield and wider Liverpool area receive training to ensure that all agencies are able to work to the same set of standards when supporting intimidated witnesses.
- Regular training sessions should be set up to ensure all agency members have access to the training. Furthermore, refresher courses should be developed to keep trainees up-to-date with any new policies and practices.
- Members from a range of different agencies should be invited and actively encouraged to attend each training session. This will aid understanding amongst attendees on the role of different agencies involved in supporting intimidated witnesses, help forge good multi-agency working relationships and subsequently help the development of referral pathways.
- Community members, for example, chairs of local residents' groups, should be invited and actively encouraged to attend the training. By participating, such individuals are able to learn first hand about the support available to intimidated witnesses. This will have the impact of giving individuals the confidence and knowledge to support members of their own community.
- A standard intimidated witness training package should be developed for use by other areas, and be flexible enough to be altered to suit local needs and requirements.

## 6. References

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