



Intermediaries: A Voice for the Voiceless

Purpose
To allow children and vulnerable people to understand, and to be understood, in the legal system

Legislation
Section 29, Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act, 1999

'Their [Intermediaries]' primary function is to improve the quality of evidence and aid understanding between the court, the advocates and the witness or defendant.'
(Criminal Practice Direction, 3F.1)

Intermediaries

Backgrounds include:

- Speech and language therapists
- Psychological and mental health professionals
- Teachers
- Social workers

...& undergo further training

Status

- Independent & impartial
- Assist prosecution/ defence/ judge by supporting communication between these parties and vulnerable person

Work with

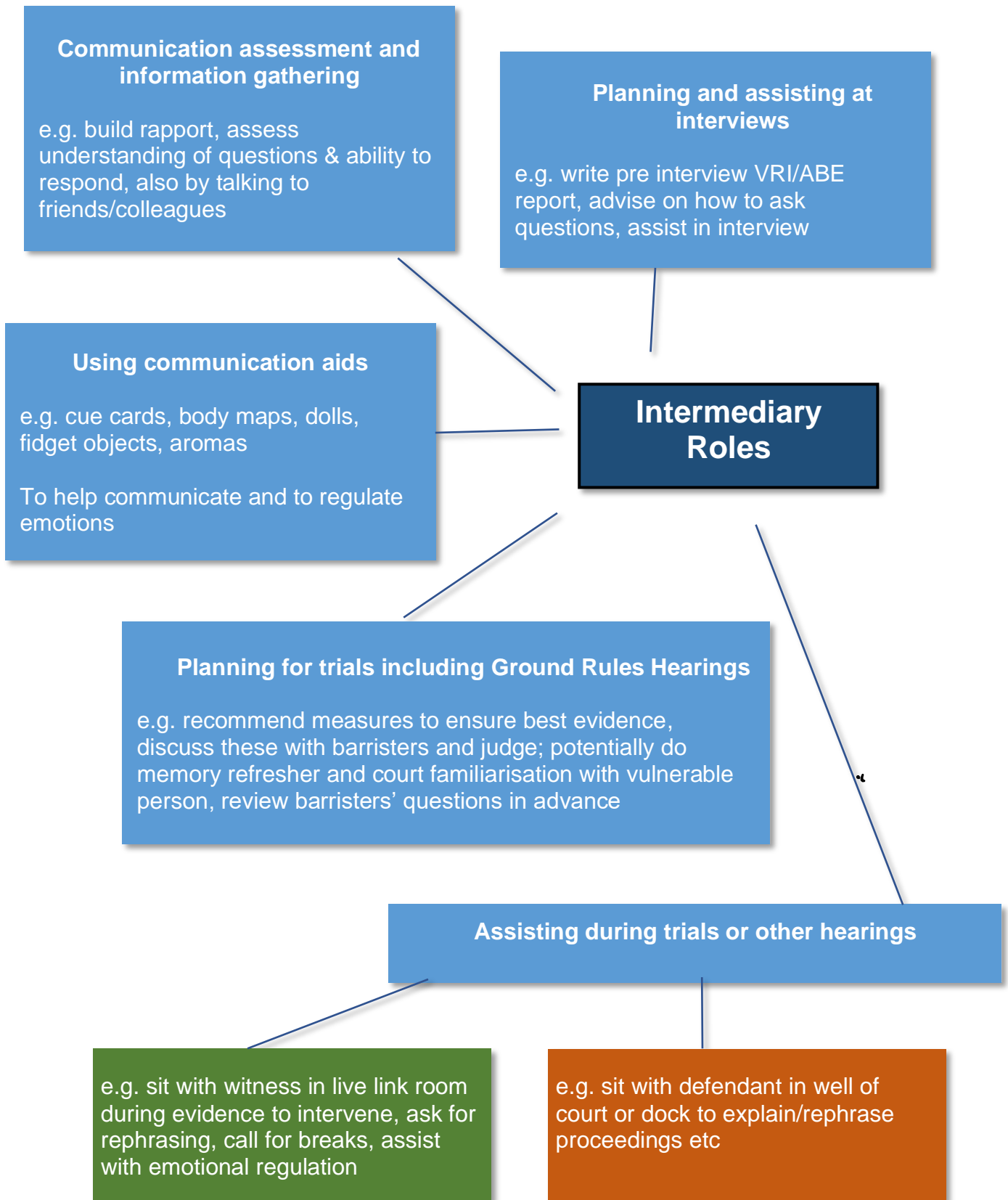
**Vulnerable defendants
Suspects
Respondents
(Discretionary)**

including family proceedings & tribunals

NB legislation, funding & access differ from witness provision

**Witnesses
(Statutory)**

- All those under 18
- Adult witnesses with assessed disability impacting on communication &/ or comprehension skills





For witnesses

- **Registered** Intermediary sourced from Witness Intermediary Scheme, run by NCA
- Call Witness Team for advice **0345 000 5463**

Process

- IO gets permission from DI/ DS
- Complete RFS form from NCA
- Return with cost code/purchase order

Accessing an Intermediary

For defendants/respondents

- Sourced by solicitor who then applies to court for special measures (see 'Sourcing Intermediaries' box) or
- Appointed at discretion of judge/ magistrate

Process

- Solicitor seeks permission/ funding from Legal Aid Authority (LAA)

For suspects

- Sourced by police or solicitor (see 'Sourcing Intermediaries' box)

Process

- Police seek permission from DI/ DS; police pay

Sourcing Intermediaries

Intermediaries listed on Intermediaries for Justice website <https://www.intermediaries-for-justice.org/>, or via agencies, e.g. Communicourt or Triangle.

For family courts

- Sourced mainly by solicitor who then makes an application in court (see 'Sourcing Intermediaries' box)

Process

- Court Order confirms that HMCTS will pay (where no other source of funding is available)