

Victim and Witness Experience of the Northern Ireland Criminal Justice System: Key Findings - 2022/23



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Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

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The key findings from the 2022/23 sweep of the Northern Ireland Victim and Witness Survey (NIVAWS) can be summarised as follows:-

GUIDES ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- The majority of victim respondents to the 2022/23 survey (79%) reported having received an 'Information for victims of crime leaflet'; approximately two thirds (64%) of those who had received it, reported having found it useful.
- One quarter of respondents overall (21% of victims and 31% of witnesses) reported being aware of the 'Guide to Northern Ireland's Criminal Justice System for Victims and Witnesses of Crime'. The majority of respondents who had referred to the guide reported having found it helpful (84% overall; 79% of victims and 100% of witnesses).
- Just over one fifth of victims (21%) reported being aware of the Victim Charter; of those victims aware of the charter, just 11% reported having referred to it; of those who referred to it, 78% reported having found it helpful.
- Fewer than 3 in 10 witnesses (27%) reported being aware of the Witness Charter; of those witnesses aware of the charter, just 9% reported having referred to it; all of those who referred to it reported having found it helpful.

VICTIM AND WITNESS CARE UNIT (VWCU)

- Overall 3 in 10 respondents in 2022/23 (28% of victims and 34% of witnesses) reported having heard of the VWCU. The 28% of victims who reported having heard of the unit in 2022/23 represented a significant increase on the 22% of victims in 2019/20 who had heard of the unit.
- Forty three percent of 2022/23 survey respondents (53% of victims and 27% of witnesses) reported having been contacted by the unit.

MAKING A STATEMENT AND INFORMATION ON CASE PROGRESSION

Giving a Statement

- As per previous sweeps of NIVAWS, the proportion of respondents satisfied with how they had been treated while giving their statement remained high in 2022/23 at 93%; 91% of victims and 95% of witnesses reported being satisfied with how they had been treated.

Information on Case Progression

- Compared with 2019/20, there were significant falls in 2022/23 at both overall level and at victim level in the proportion of respondents who reported having been given the name and contact details of the officer in charge of their case; overall, the proportion fell from 82% to 77%; among victims, it fell from 86% to 79%.
- Approximately one third (35%) of respondents, 41% of victims and 24% of witnesses reported having officially heard about the progress of their case within one month of giving their initial statement to the police; almost one fifth (18%) of respondents reported having waited over 6 months for an official update and 11% reported not having heard anything officially at all.
- The police and the PPS were the two criminal justice sources most frequently identified for informing respondents about the progress of their respective cases (cited by 45% and 21% of respondents respectively).
- Overall 71% of respondents reported that a criminal justice source had kept them informed about the progression of their case. Compared with 2019/20, there was a significant fall in 2022/23 in the proportion of witnesses reporting that a criminal justice source had kept them informed (down from 68% to 58%).
- Compared with 2019/20, there was a significant fall in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who were satisfied with how often they had been kept informed about the progress of their case (down from 64% to 59%).
- Similar to previous sweeps of the survey, approximately three quarters of respondents in 2022/23 (76%) expressed satisfaction with the information received about the progress of their case.

CASE OUTCOME

Sample Profile

- The sample profile in terms of case outcome has remained broadly similar across all sweeps of the survey with approximately half of all cases going to court, approximately one fifth resulting in the charges being dropped, one in ten resulting in a caution/warrant being issued, and a small proportion resulting in a youth conference.
- Similar to previous sweeps of NIVAWS, approximately one fifth of respondents in 2022/23 (17%) reported not knowing the outcome of the case in which they had been involved.

Youth Conference

- Of cases resulting in a youth conference in 2022/23, 50% were reported as having involved a diversionary youth conference, 25% involved a court ordered conference; in the remaining 25% of cases, the respondents reported not knowing whether the youth conference had been diversionary or court ordered.
- In 2022/23, the majority of those involved in cases where a youth conference had resulted (9 out of the 14 respondents) reported being satisfied with the outcome of the conference.

Dropped Cases and Formal Police Cautions/Warnings

- In instances where cases had been dropped or a formal police caution/warning issued, there was a significant fall in 2022/23 in the proportion of victims who reported having been contacted by the police or the PPS and told the reason for this (down from 69% in 2019/20 to 58% in 2022/23).
- Just over one quarter (27%) of those involved in cases which had been dropped reported being satisfied with the case outcome; this compared with the equivalent figure of 66% for those involved in cases where a formal police caution/warning had been issued.

PRE-TRIAL EXPERIENCE

Attendance Requirements

- Of those involved in cases which progressed to trial/hearing in 2022/23, 57% had been asked to give evidence at the trial/hearing; 22% ultimately gave evidence.

(Pre-Trial Concerns About Attending Court

- In 2022/23, the two concerns most frequently cited by respondents with regard to court attendance related to potential contact with the defendant and/or his/her supporters (cited by 56% of respondents) and fear of intimidation from the defendant and/or his/her supporters (52%). Additionally, the proportions of respondents who expressed concern on both these aspects of court attendance in 2022/23 were significantly higher at both overall and at victim level compared with the equivalent figures for 2019/20.

- Overall, the proportion of respondents who cited concern about potential contact with the defendant or his/her supporters increased from 40% in 2019/20 to 56% in 2022/23; at victim level, the proportion increased from 48% in 2019/20 to 72% in 2022/23.
- Overall, the proportion of respondents who cited concern about intimidating behaviour on the part of the defendant or his/her supporters increased from 34% in 2019/20 to 52% in 2022/23; at victim level, the proportion increased from 46% to 67%.
- On a positive front, however, there were significant reductions in 2022/23 in the proportions of witnesses expressing concern about travel to court (down from 6% in 2019/20 to 0%) and the expenses involved (down from 14% to 4%).

Notification of Court Date

- Over two fifths of respondents in 2022/23 (42%) reported receiving over one month's notice of the trial date; 37% reported receiving between 2 and 4 weeks notice, 18% received less than 2 weeks notice and 3% didn't know how much notice they had received.

Pre-Trial Court Familiarisation Visit

- Compared with 2019/20, there were significant falls in 2022/23 at overall level, and at both victim and witness levels in the proportion of respondents who reported having been offered the opportunity to visit the court in advance for familiarisation purposes. Overall, the proportion fell from 47% in 2019/20 to 28% in 2022/23; for victims it fell from 56% to 37%, and, for witnesses, it fell from 42% to 13%.
- Additionally, among witnesses, the proportions who accepted the offer of a pre-trial court familiarisation visit in 2022/23 was significantly lower in 2022/23 (0%) than in 2019/20 (23%).

Information Received in Lead up to Trial

- The proportion of respondents who reported having received a copy of their original statement to the police, or of having had the opportunity to view the video of their recorded statement has remained at a high level in 2022/23 (Overall – 85%; Victims – 87%; Witnesses – 80%).
- In terms of information received in the lead up to the trial, respondents were most likely to state that they had received adequate information on the time they needed to arrive at court (90%) and how to get to court (80%). The three areas where they were least likely to report having received adequate information were giving evidence remotely by Sight Link (24%), the time involved in being a witness in court (34%) and the length of time to wait before being called to give evidence (35%).
- Compared with 2019/20, there were some significant reductions in 2022/23 in the proportions of respondents who reported having received enough information on the following dimensions:-
 - the time involved in being a witness (Overall – down from 49% in 2019/20 to 34% in 2022/23);
 - what you needed to bring with you to court (Witnesses – down from 74% to 52%);
 - the time you needed to arrive at court (Overall – down from 97% to 90%; Victim – down from 98% to 91%);
 - who to contact on arrival at court (Witnesses – down from 76% to 57%), and
 - what would happen in court (Overall – down from 64% to 51%).

Satisfaction with how Dealt with in Lead up to the Trial

- Overall, 84% of respondents in 2022/23 were satisfied with the information received to prepare them for going to court.
- Compared with 2019/20, there was, however, a significant reduction in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who had been satisfied with how they had been dealt with prior to attending court (down from 88% in 2019/20 to 79% in 2022/23).

EXPERIENCE AT COURT

Attendance at Court

- The vast majority of respondents in 2022/23 (73%) reported that they had only to attend court on the one day.
- Of respondents asked to attend court to give evidence in 2022/23, the majority (65%) reported that they had not ultimately been required to give evidence; the remainder reported having to give evidence on just the one day.

Waiting Time at Court

- The majority of respondents (83% overall, 85% of victims and 80% of witnesses) reported having been put in a separate waiting room at court from the witnesses for the other side.
- In terms of waiting time at court to give evidence on the first day of giving evidence, 27% of respondents in 2022/23 reported waiting up to 1 hour, 22% waited 1-2 hours, 37% waited 2-4 hours and 15% waited more than 4 hours.
- The majority of respondents (65%) reported being given either hourly (41%) or more frequent updates (24%) while waiting at court.
- In 2022/23, only one fifth of respondents whose evidence was not needed had been informed of this before the trial date or at least before arriving at court on the trial date. At the other extreme, almost half of respondents (48%) had been waiting at court for 2 or more hours before being advised that their evidence would not be needed.
- As for previous sweeps of the survey, the main reason for evidence not being needed in 2022/23 was due to the defendant pleading guilty (cited by 65% of respondents).

Understanding of what was Happening in Court

- Of respondents asked to give evidence in court, there were significant falls at both overall and at victim levels in the proportion of respondents who reported that they had understood what was happening in court while they were there. Overall, the proportion fell from 93% to 82%; at victim level, the proportion fell from 93% to 76%.
- Of respondents not asked to give evidence, 63% (67% of victims and 50% of witnesses) reported understanding what was happening in court.

Consideration Shown to Victims and Witnesses in Court

- Overall, 71% of respondents in 2022/23 (64% of victims and 81% of witnesses) reported being satisfied with the consideration shown to them before giving evidence in court.
- Seventy one percent of respondents (76% of victims and 63% of witnesses) reported having met the PPS lawyer before entering the court room.
- The vast majority of those who had met the PPS lawyer felt that he/she had been courteous towards them (Overall – 90%; Victims – 84%; Witnesses – 100%).
- In 2022/23, fewer than half of those who had been cross-examined (47%) felt that the barrister for the other side had been courteous towards them. The 75% of witnesses who felt this to be the case in 2022/23 was significantly higher than the equivalent figure for 2019/20 (44%).
- Of those who ultimately gave evidence in 2022/23, 85% (75% of victims and 100% of witnesses) felt that the magistrate/judge had been courteous towards them. The proportion of witnesses who felt this way (100%) represented a significant increase on the 88% who expressed a similar view in 2019/20.
- Overall, 78% of respondents (68% of victims and 94% of witnesses) felt that they had been dealt with fairly while giving evidence.
- Compared with 2019/20, there was a significant fall in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents overall who had been satisfied with their experience at court (down from 78% satisfied in 2019/20 to 66% in 2022/23). The proportion of witnesses satisfied has remained fairly stable at over 80% across recent sweeps of the survey.

Feelings of Safety

- Compared with 2019/20, there were significant falls in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who felt safe before going to court; these differences were recorded at both overall level (down from 79% in 2019/20 to 62% in 2022/23) and at victim level (down from 71% to 49%).
- Of those asked to give evidence in 2022/23, 83% (79% of victims and 88% of witnesses) reported feeling safe while in the court room. Of those not asked to give evidence but attended court, 29% (20% of victims and 50% of witnesses) felt safe in the court room.
- Overall, 28% of 2022/23 survey respondents (36% of victims and 13% of witnesses) reported that they or their families had felt intimidated at some stage of the process. The 28% who felt intimidated at overall level represented a significant increase on the equivalent figure of 21% in 2019/20.
- Of the 2022/23 respondents who had felt intimidated, 15% reported that the intimidation had occurred either in the court building or in the court room. The proportions reporting intimidation in the court building or the court room did not represent significant change compared with the equivalent figures for 2019/20.

Case Outcome and Sentence

- Eighty one percent of respondents to the 2022/23 survey (88% of victims and 66% of witnesses) reported that they had found out the outcome of their respective cases. The majority of those who found out the outcome felt that it had been fair (Overall - 67%; Victims – 62%; Witnesses – 84%).
- In 2022/23, 73% of respondents overall (79% of victims and 57% of witnesses) reported knowing what the sentence had been in their case.
- Of those who knew what the sentence was, fewer than half thought that it had been fair (Overall – 44%; Victims – 45%; Witnesses – 42%). The equivalent figures at overall and witness levels in 2019/20 were significantly higher at 57% and 66% respectively.

Expenses/Compensation

- Compared with 2019/20, there were significant falls in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents overall and in the proportion of victims who reported having received a witness claim form (Overall – down from 86% to 77%; Victims – down from 86% to 71%).
- Of victims who applied for compensation in 2022/23, 43% reported being satisfied with the service received from the Compensation Agency.

VOLUNTARY SUPPORT SERVICES AND VICTIM INFORMATION SCHEMES

Voluntary Support Services

- Compared with 2019/20, there was a significant fall in 2022/23 in the proportion of victims who reported having had contact with Victim Support NI at some stage during the process (down from 51% in 2019/20 to 44% in 2022/23).
- The 77% of victims satisfied with their contact with Victim Support NI in 2022/23 represented a significant fall on the 85% satisfied in the 2019/20 survey.
- Of 2022/23 respondents who attended court, 60% overall (68% of victims and 46% of witnesses) reported having received support from either the Adult Witness Service or the Young Witness Service. Almost all of those who had availed of these services reported being satisfied with the support received (Overall- 96%; Victims – 97%; Witnesses – 96%).

Victim Information Schemes

- Of the 25 victims involved in cases where the offender had received a custodial sentence of 6 months or longer, only 3 (12%) reported being aware of the Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme (PRVIS); none of the 3 had registered with the scheme.
- Of the 38 victims involved in cases where the offender received a sentence involving Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) supervision, only 9 (24%) reported being aware of the PBNI Information Scheme; 8 out of the 9 respondents who had been aware of the scheme reported that they had not registered with it; one respondent did not know whether or not he/she had registered with it.

FUTURE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Likelihood of Future Engagement with the Criminal Justice System

- Approximately two fifths (41%) of respondents overall (32% of victims and 56% of witnesses) who ultimately gave evidence in court indicated that they would be likely to agree to be a witness in a criminal trial again.
- The vast majority of witnesses (93%) advised that, were they to witness the same type of crime again, they would report it to the police.
- Eighty percent of victims suggested that, were they to become victims of a similar crime again, they would report the incident to the police.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM – GLOBAL SATISFACTION INDICATORS

Overall Satisfaction with the Criminal Justice System

- Compared with 2019/20, there were significant reductions in 2022/23 in the proportions of respondents, both at overall and at witness level, who reported having been satisfied with the information they had been given about the criminal justice system. Overall, the proportion satisfied fell from 75% to 68%; at witness level, the proportion fell from 81% to 73%.

- Fifty six percent of respondents overall (52% of victims and 60% of witnesses), reported being satisfied with how well they had been kept informed about the progress of their case.
- Seventy nine percent of respondents overall (72% of victims and 85% of witnesses) reported being satisfied with how well they had been treated by staff in the Criminal Justice System. Compared with 2019/20, there were significant reductions in the proportions satisfied at overall and at witness levels (Overall – down from 86% to 79%; Witness level – down from 92% to 85%).
- Finally, 68% of respondents (60% of victims and 74% of witnesses) reported being satisfied with the contact they had with the Criminal Justice System; the 68% of respondents satisfied at overall level represented a significant fall on the equivalent figure of 73% satisfied in 2019/20.

Information on the background to the Northern Ireland Victim and Witness Survey (NIVAWS) and on the methodology adopted can be accessed in the NIVAWS User Guide.

Since its initiation in 2008/09, NIVAWS has historically provided the vehicle for reviewing and monitoring progress in relation to the victim and witness experience of the Northern Ireland Criminal Justice System (CJS).

This report outlines the key findings from the 2022/23 survey and, for comparison purposes, presents them alongside the equivalent findings for the 2016/17 and the 2019/20 surveys. The findings for each of the years are presented at both overall, and at victim and witness levels.

The findings throughout the report are largely presented through graphical representation. Commentary throughout the report is largely restricted to highlighting some of the overall findings for 2022/23 in addition to those findings where statistically significant change was recorded compared with the equivalent findings from the 2019/20 survey.

In addition to this summary report, the full numerical details for all of the findings, including the base figures on which any percentages have been calculated, are available in the accompanying Microsoft Excel document. The numbering system used for the headings of each section within this report relate to the corresponding worksheet numbers in the excel file. Thus, for example, the excel files related to GUIDES can be found on worksheets 1 and 1a respectively; those related to AWARENESS OF AND CONTACT WITH THE VICTIM AND WITNESS CARE UNIT (VWCU) can be found on worksheets 2 and 2a respectively etc.

The findings for the 2022/23 survey should be viewed in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic having had a significant impact on court activity. It is possible that this along with the range of measures introduced to assist during the pandemic will have impacted on victims' and witnesses' experience of the Criminal Justice System.

This bulletin is available on the [Department of Justice website \(opens in a new window\)](#), in the Statistics and Research Victim and Witness Research section. Feedback on this publication can be provided directly to Analytical Services Group at the email address listed below.

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Some Technical Notes:

(1) Statistically significant change

Statistically significant changes are highlighted throughout the report through the use of colour coded circular symbols on the charts as follows:-

- Significant positive change
- Significant negative change
- Significant change of an ambivalent nature i.e. neither positive nor negative

(2) Rounding

The findings throughout the report are rounded to the nearest whole number. In any instances where the decimal portion of a number is exactly 0.5, the approach taken has been to round up to the next highest whole number.

Figures less than 0.5 are represented by the symbol '<1'.



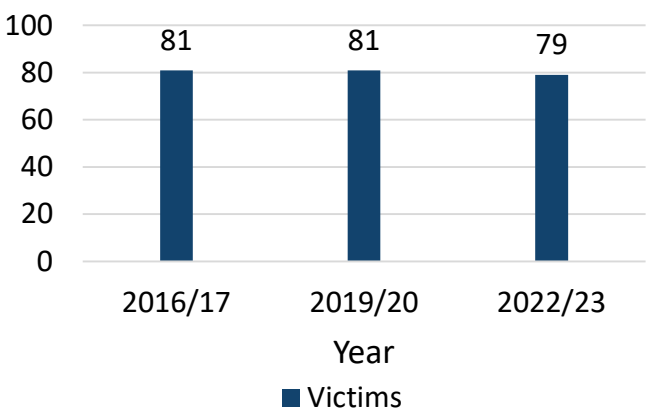
This section provides the survey findings related to respondents’ awareness and experience of the various leaflets, guides and charters that are available on the Northern Ireland Criminal Justice System (CJS).

1. GUIDES

(i) Information for Victims of Crime Leaflet

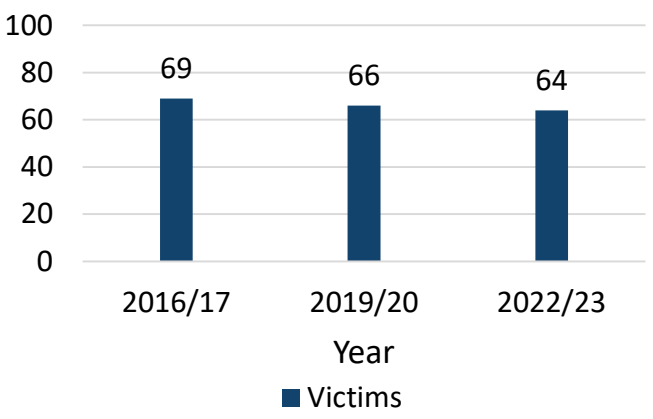
Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in either the proportions of respondents who reported having received an ‘Information for victims of crime leaflet’ (Figure 1.1) or in the proportion who had found it helpful (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.1: Proportion of victims who received an ‘Information for victims of crime’ leaflet (%)

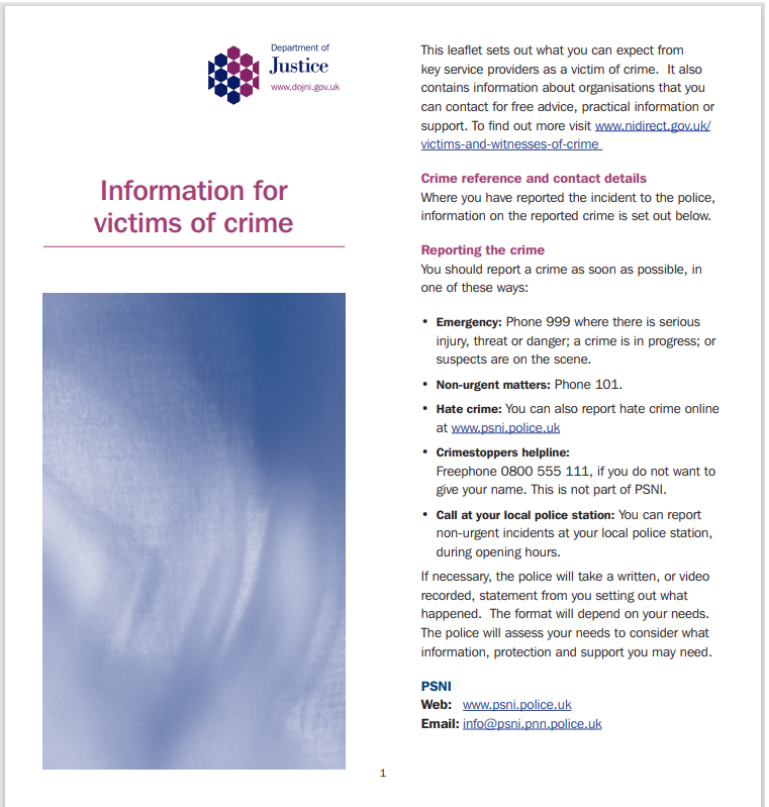


1. Asked of all victims

Figure 1.2: Proportion of victims who found the ‘Information for victims of crime’ leaflet useful (%)



1. Asked of all victims who received an ‘Information for victims of crime’ leaflet

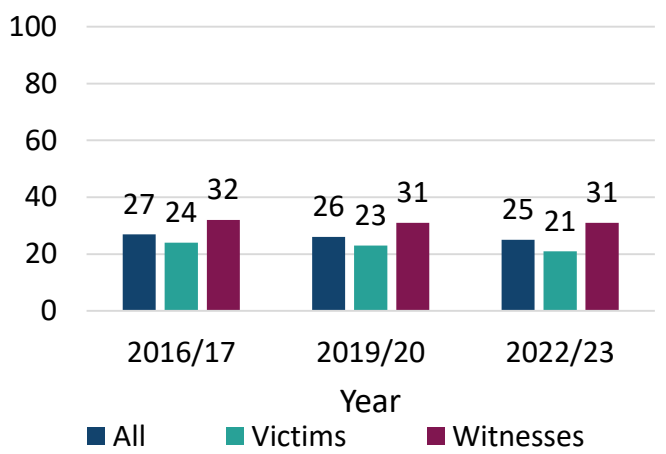


1. GUIDES

(ii) Guide to Northern Ireland’s Criminal Justice System for Victims and Witnesses of Crime

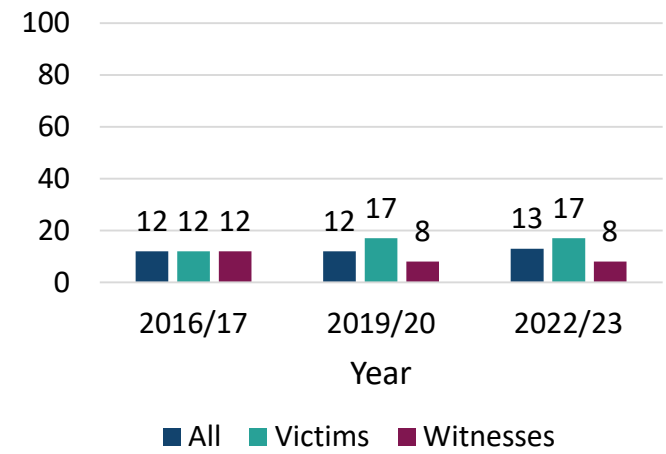
Compared with 2019/20, no significant changes were recorded in 2022/23 in relation to reported awareness of, referral to or helpfulness of the ‘Guide to Northern Ireland’s Criminal Justice System for Victims and Witnesses of Crime’ (see Figures 1.3 to 1.5 respectively).

Figure 1.3: Proportion of respondents aware of the ‘Guide to Northern Ireland’s Criminal Justice System for Victims and Witnesses of Crime’ (%)



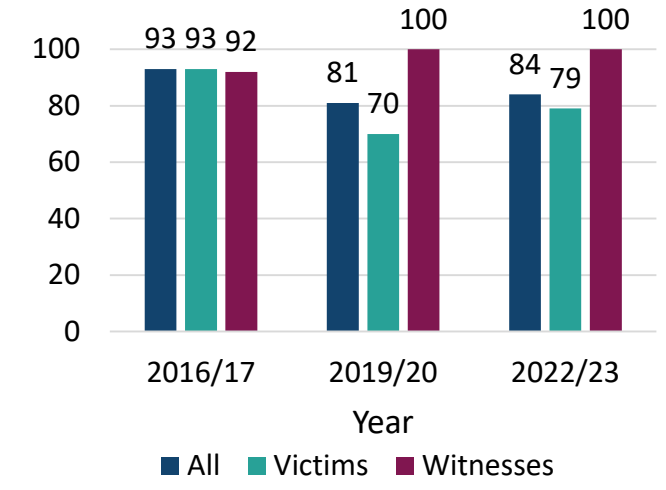
1. Asked of all victims and witnesses

Figure 1.4: Proportion of respondents who had referred to the Guide (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who were aware of the Guide

Figure 1.5: Proportion of respondents who had found the Guide helpful (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who referred to the Guide

1. GUIDES

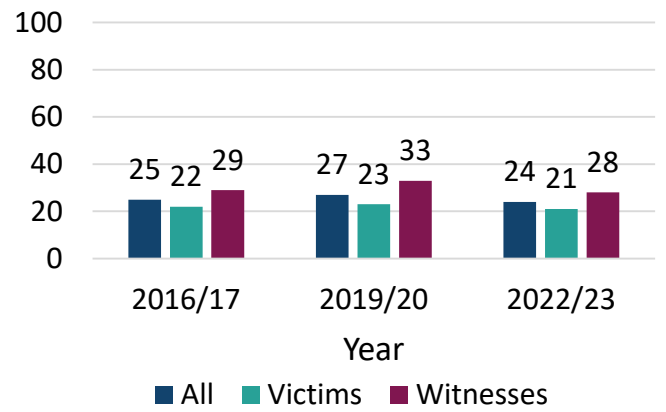
(iii) Victim Charter

The Victim Charter advises victims of crime about their entitlements and the standards of service they can expect to receive when they come into contact with the Criminal Justice System.

There was no significant change recorded in 2022/23 in relation to reported victim and witness awareness of the Victim Charter (Figure 1.6).

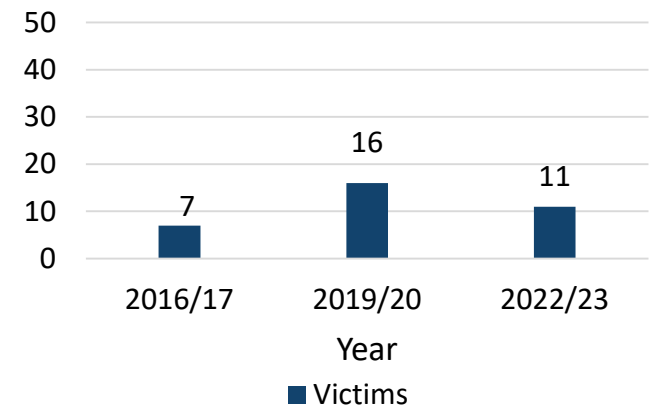
Additionally, there was no significant change recorded in either the proportion of victims who had referred to the Victim Charter (Figure 1.7) or in the proportion who had reported finding it helpful (Figure 1.8).

Figure 1.6: Proportion of respondents aware of the Victim Charter (%)



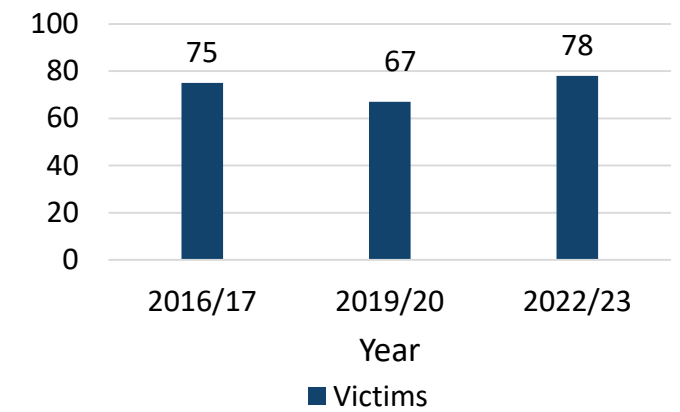
1. Asked of all victims and witnesses

Figure 1.7: Proportion of victims who referred to the Victim Charter (%)



1. Asked of all victims who were aware of the Victim Charter

Figure 1.8: Proportion of victims who found the Victim Charter helpful (%)



1. Asked of all victims who referred to the Victim Charter

1. GUIDES

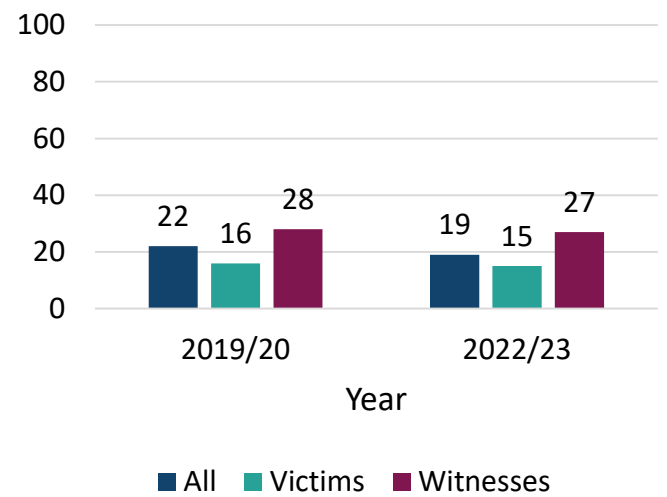
(iv) Witness Charter

The Witness Charter sets out entitlements and standards of service for witnesses of crime.

There was no significant change recorded in 2022/23 in relation to reported victim and witness awareness of the Witness Charter (Figure 1.9).

Additionally, there was no significant change recorded in either the proportion of witnesses who referred to the Witness Charter (Figure 1.10) or in the proportion who had reported finding it helpful (Figures 1.11).

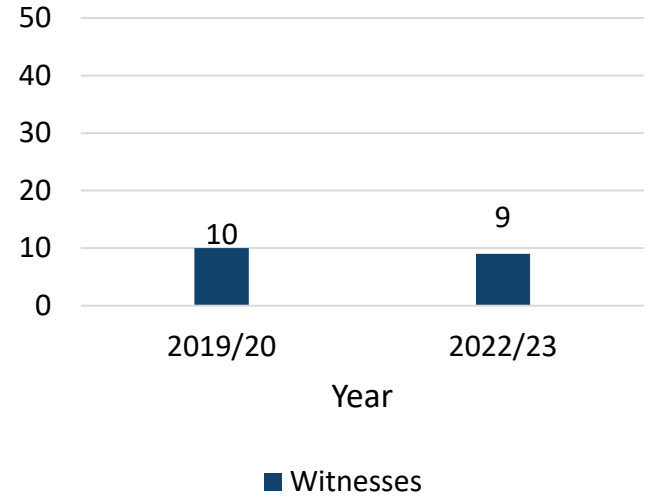
Figure 1.9: Proportion of respondents aware of the Witness Charter (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses

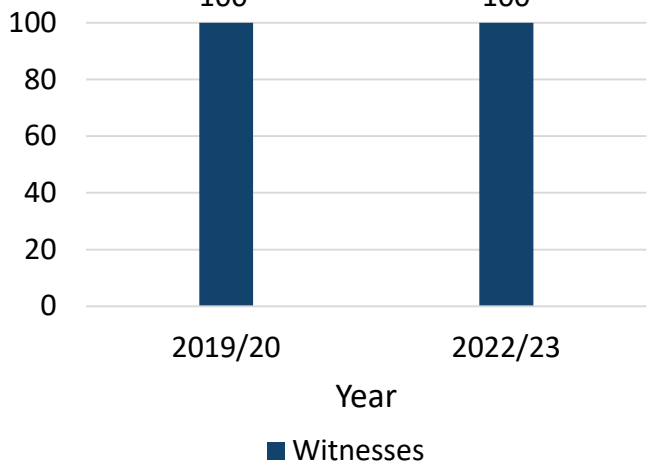
2. New question introduced in 2019/20 (applies to all charts on this page)

Figure 1.10: Proportion of witnesses who referred to the Witness Charter (%)



1. Asked of all witnesses who were aware of the Witness Charter

Figure 1.11: Proportion of witnesses who found the Witness Charter helpful (%)



1. Asked of all witnesses who referred to the Witness Charter

NIVAWS: Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU)

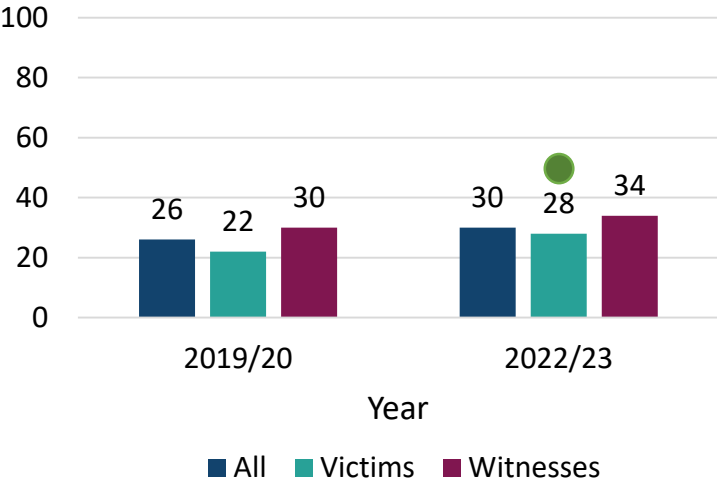
This section provides information on awareness of and contact with the Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU).

2. AWARENESS OF AND CONTACT WITH THE VICTIM AND WITNESS CARE UNIT (VWCU)

The VWCU provides a single point of contact with the Criminal Justice System for victims and witnesses going through the criminal justice process. The unit, which is operated by staff from the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), provides victims and witnesses with information and assistance from the point when an investigation or charge file is submitted to the PPS through to the outcome of any court proceedings.

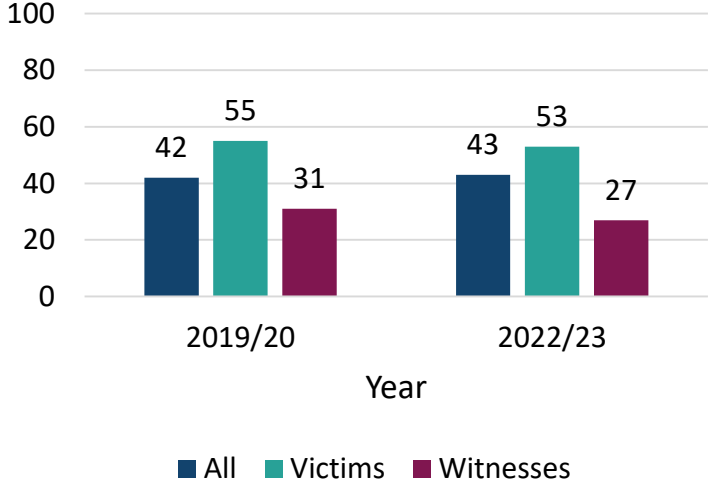
Compared with 2019/20, there was a significant increase in the proportion of victims who reported having heard of the VWCU (up from 22% in 2019/20 to 28% in 2022/23)(Figure 2.1). There was no significant change, however, in the proportion of respondents reporting that they had been contacted by the unit (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.1: Proportion of respondents who had heard of the VWCU (%)



- 1. Asked of all victims and witnesses
- 2. New question introduced in 2019/20 (applies to both charts on this page)

Figure 2.2: Proportion of respondents who reported having been contacted by the VWCU (%)



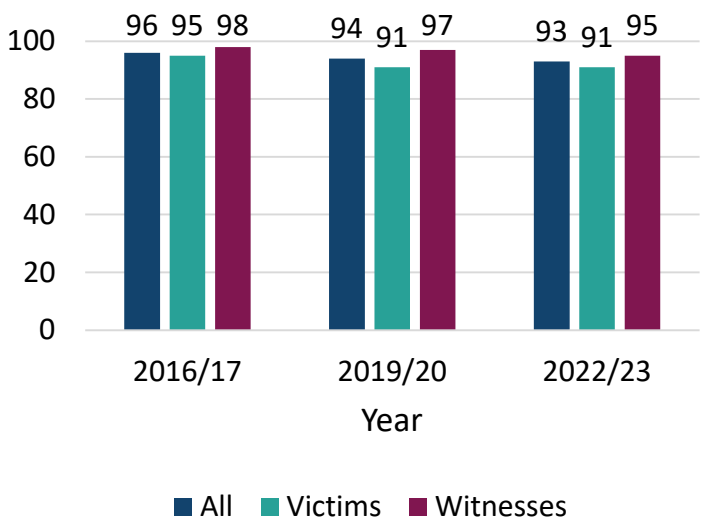
- 1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who had heard of the Victim and Witness Care Unit

This section outlines the survey findings related to respondents' experience of giving a statement to the police, and also their experience of being kept updated on the progression of their respective cases.

3. GIVING A STATEMENT

There was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who reported being satisfied with how they had been treated while giving their statement to the police (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Proportion of respondents satisfied with how they had been treated while giving their statement to the police (%)

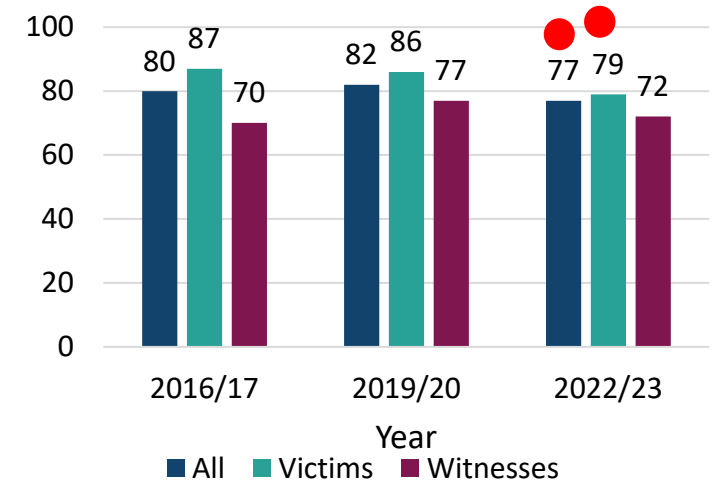


1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who gave a statement to the police

4. INFORMATION ON CASE PROGRESSION

(i) Name and contact details of the officer in charge of case
 Compared with 2019/20, there were significant falls in 2022/23 at both overall and at victim level in the proportion of respondents who reported having been given the name and contact details of the officer in charge of their case (Figure 4.1). Overall, the proportion dropped from 82% to 77%; at victim level, the proportion dropped from 86% to 79%.

Figure 4.1: Proportion of respondents given the name and contact details of the officer in charge of their case (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses

4. INFORMATION ON CASE PROGRESSION

(ii) Timescale for update on case progression after giving statement

Figure 4.2 shows the length of time the 2022/23 respondents reported having waited between giving their initial statement to the police and being informed officially about the progress of their case. Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who reported having heard officially about the progress of their case within one month of giving their statement to the police (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.2: Length of time respondents waited from giving their initial statement to the police to hearing officially about the progress of their case, 2022/23 (%)

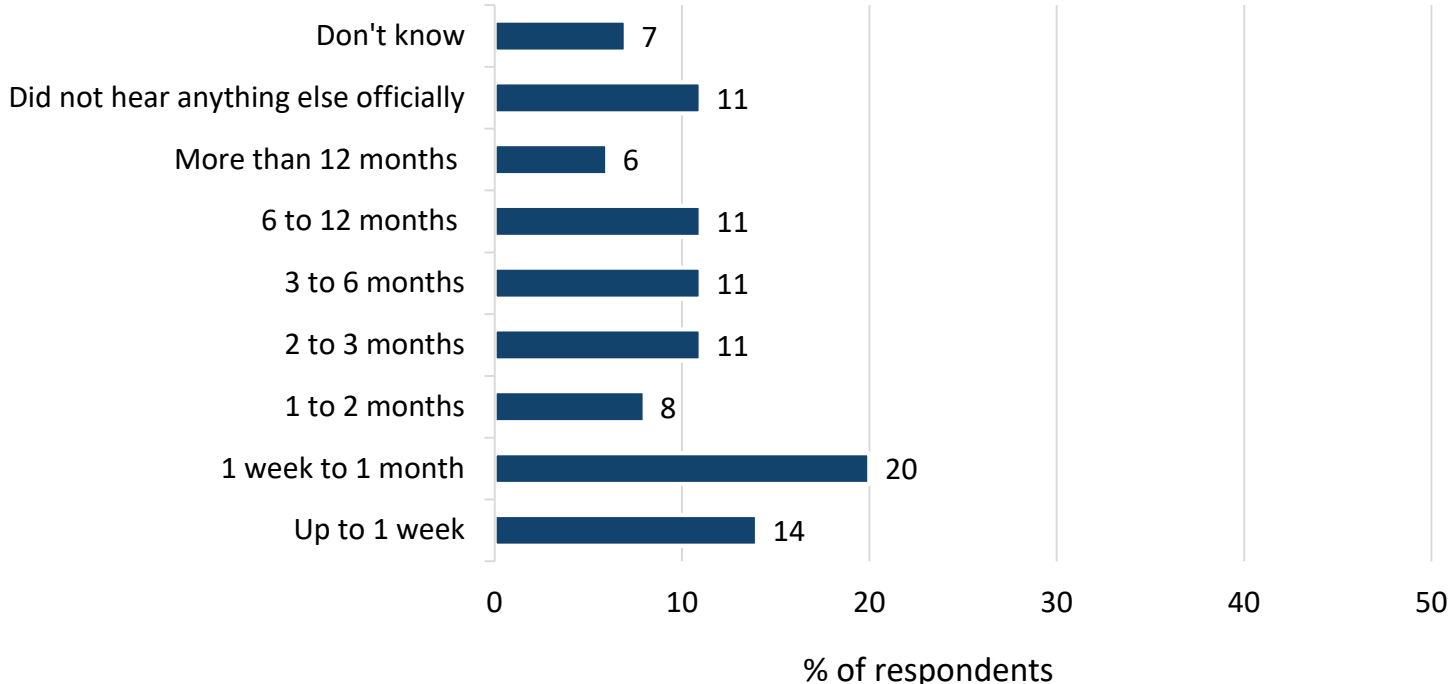
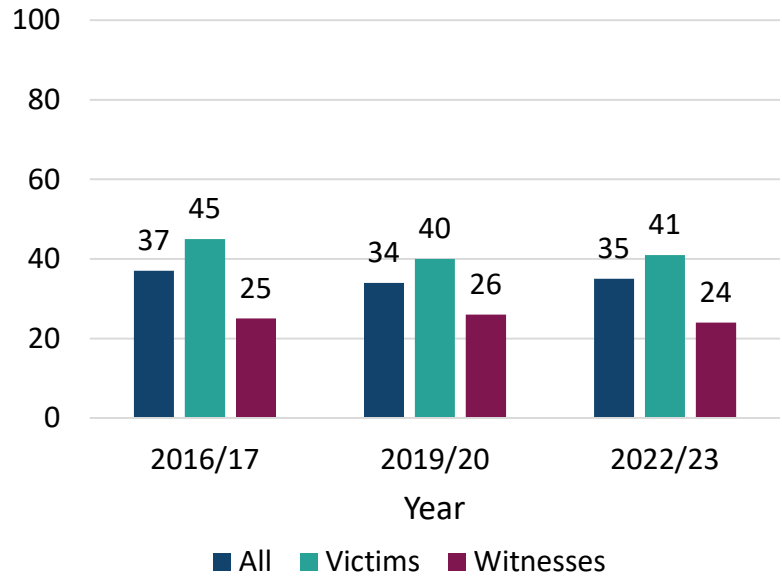


Figure 4.3: Proportion of respondents who heard officially about the progress of their case within 1 month of giving their initial statement to the police (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who gave a statement (applies to both charts on this page)

4. INFORMATION ON CASE PROGRESSION

(iii) Source of Update on Case Progression

Figure 4.4. shows the criminal justice sources identified by respondents as having kept them informed about the progress of their respective cases. The police and the PPS were the two most frequently identified sources (cited by 45% and 21% of respondents respectively).

Compared with 2019/20, there has been a significant fall in the proportion of witnesses who reported that a criminal justice source had kept them informed about the progress of their case (down from 68% in 2019/20 to 58% in 2022/23)(Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.4: Criminal justice sources identified as having informed respondents about the progress of their respective cases, 2022/23 (%)

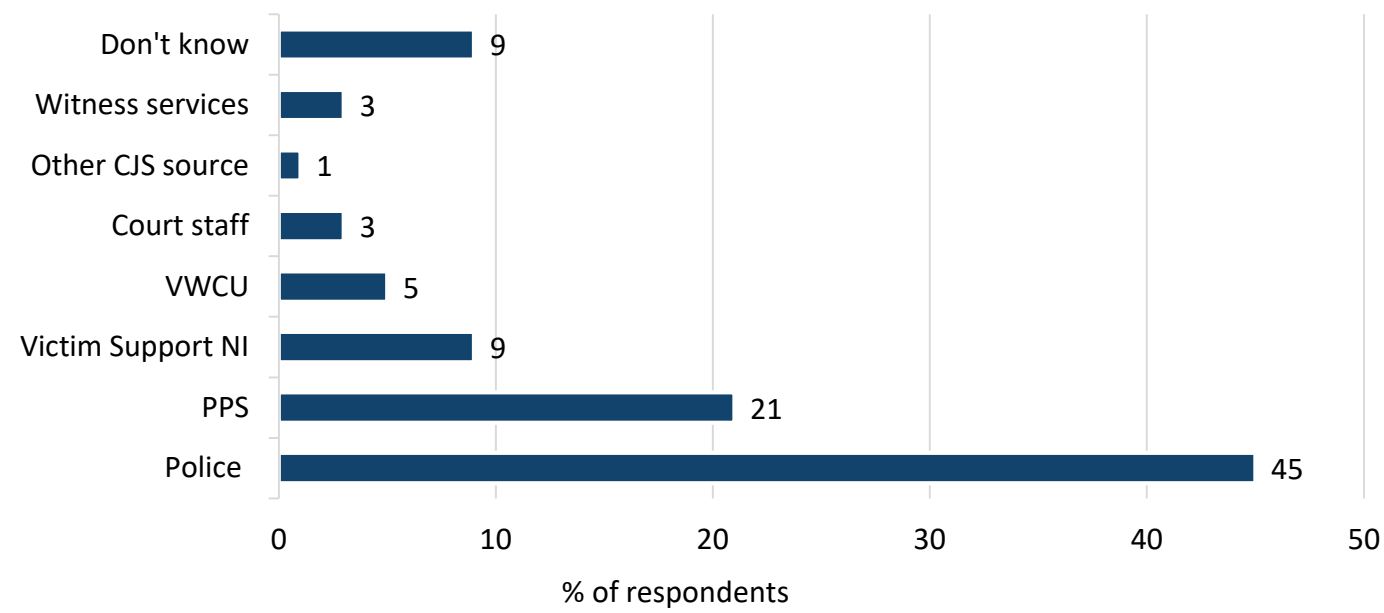
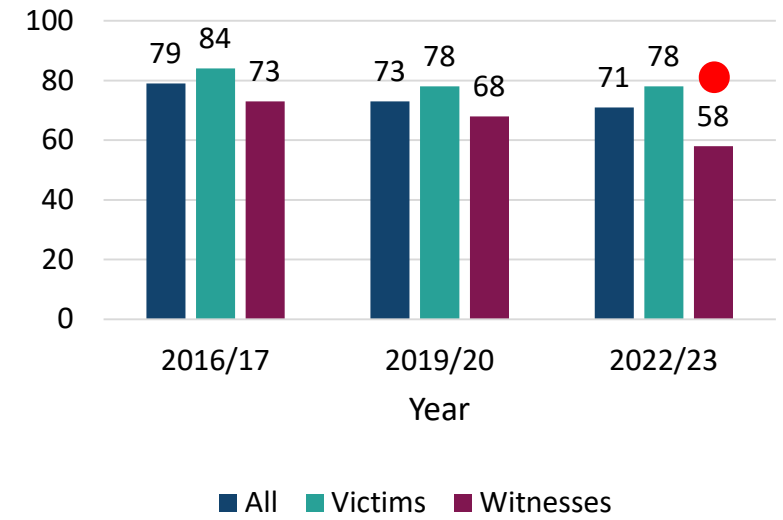


Figure 4.5: Proportion of respondents who stated that a criminal justice source had kept them informed about the progress of their case (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses (applies to both charts on this page)
2. Respondents could select more than one response option for this question (applies to both charts on this page)

4. INFORMATION ON CASE PROGRESSION

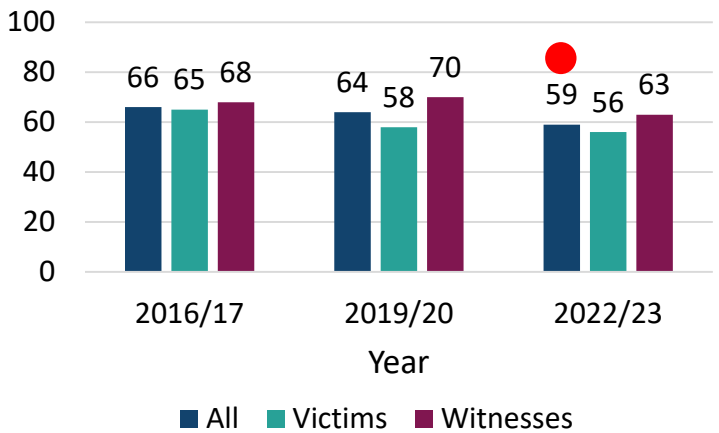
(iv) Frequency of updates on case progression

Compared with 2019/20, there was a significant fall in 2022/23 in the overall proportion of respondents who were satisfied with how often they had been kept informed about the progress of their case (down from 64% in 2019/20 to 59% in 2022/23)(Figure 4.6).

(v) Satisfaction with the information received on case progression

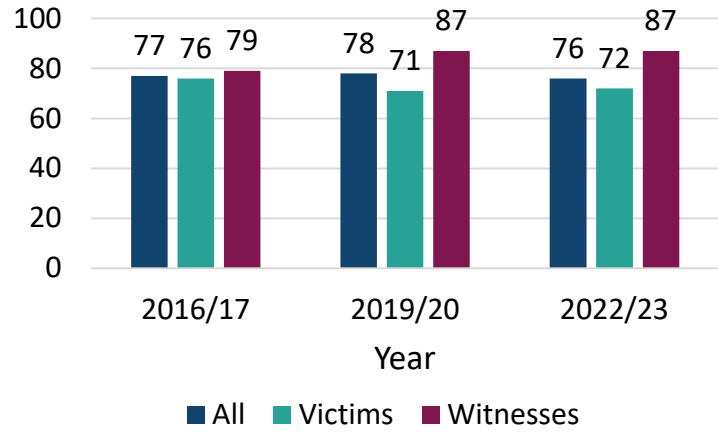
There was no significant change recorded in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who reported being satisfied with the information they had received about the progress of their respective cases (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.6: Proportion of respondents satisfied with how often they had been kept informed about the progress of their case (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses

Figure 4.7: Proportion of respondents satisfied with the information received about the progress of their case (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who were kept informed about the progress of their case by a criminal justice source

NIVAWS: Case Outcome

This section outlines the overall case outcomes for respondents to the 2022/23 survey. In addition, some key findings related to the experiences of those whose cases did not proceed to court (i.e. those cases resulting in a diversionary youth conference, a formal caution/warning or those which were dropped) are outlined.

5. SAMPLE PROFILE

The profile of the sample in terms of case outcomes has remained broadly similar across all sweeps of NIVAWS, with approximately half of all cases going to court (includes court ordered youth conferences), approximately one fifth resulting in the charges being dropped, one in ten resulting in a caution/warrant being issued, and a small proportion resulting in a youth conference (excludes court ordered youth conferences) (Figure 5.1).

As for previous years, it remained the case in 2022/23 that approximately one fifth of respondents overall reported not knowing the outcome of their respective cases (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.1: Case outcome, 2022/23 (%)

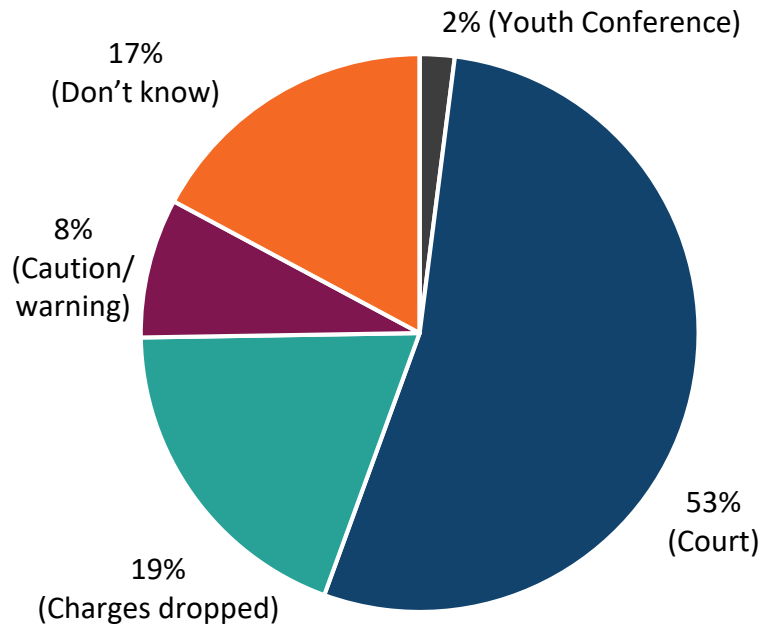
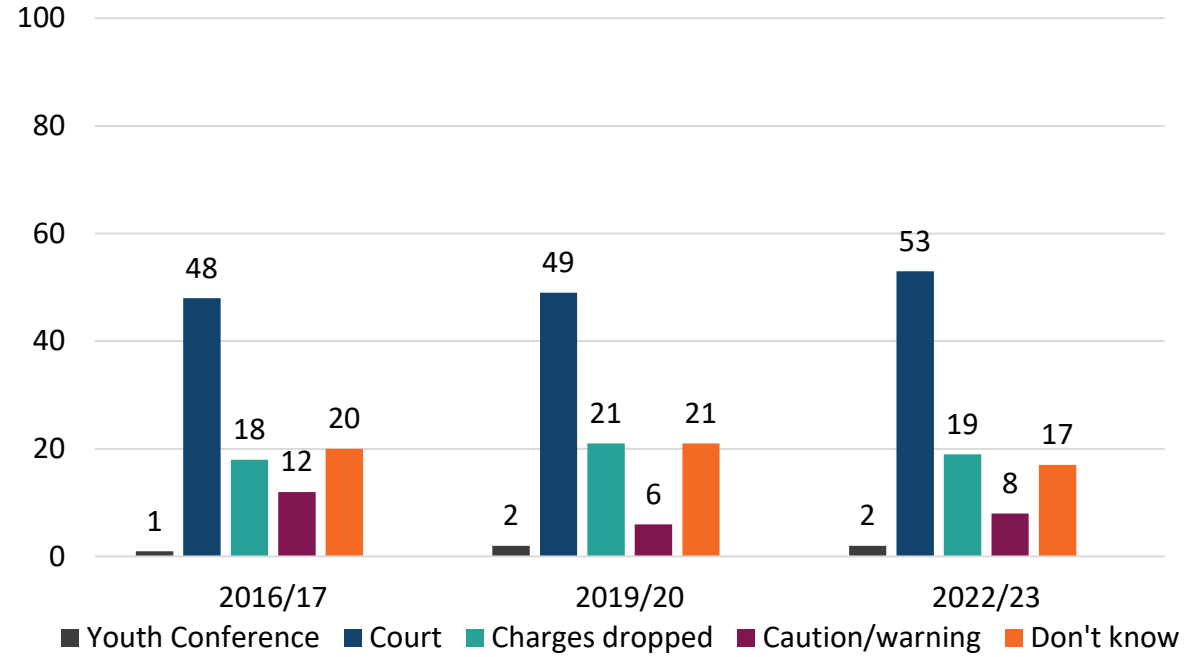


Figure 5.2: Case outcome (%)



1. These charts show the sample profile which was established from responses to a range of the survey questions

6. YOUTH CONFERENCE

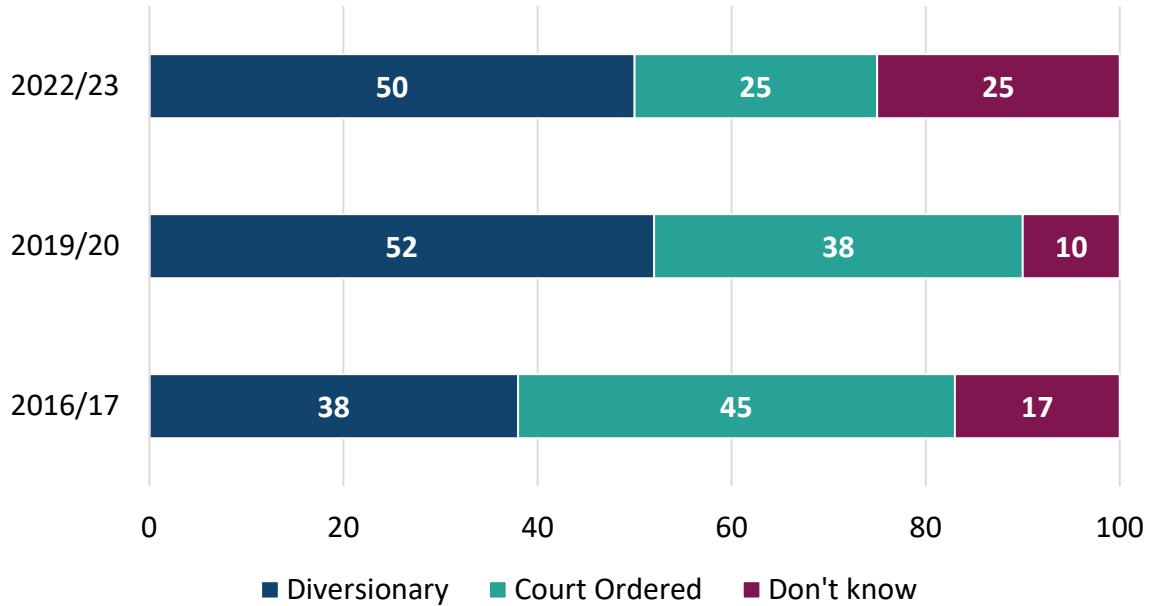
(i) Type of youth conference

The relative proportions of cases reported as having resulted in diversionary and court ordered youth conferences in 2022/23 has not changed significantly compared with 2019/20 (Figure 6.1).

(ii) Satisfaction with the outcome of the youth conference

The majority of those who attended a youth conference in 2022/23 (9 out of the 14) reported being satisfied with its outcome (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.1: Whether the case involved a diversionary or court ordered youth conference (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses involved in cases where the young person was referred for a youth conference

Figure 6.2: Respondent satisfaction profile with regard to the outcome of the youth conference (number), 2022/23



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who knew the outcome of the youth conference

7. DROPPED CASES AND FORMAL POLICE CAUTIONS/WARNINGS

(i) Explanation for why charges were dropped
 Compared with 2019/20, there was a significant fall in 2022/23 in the proportion of victims who reported having been contacted by the police or the PPS and told the reason why the charges for their respective cases had been dropped (down from 69% in 2019/20 to 58% in 2022/23) (Figure 7.1).

(ii) Satisfaction with case outcome where case was dropped or a formal caution/warning issued
 In instances where either the case had been dropped or a formal caution/warning had been issued, there was no significant change recorded in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents satisfied with the outcome of their respective cases (Figure 7.2).
 There was, however, a significant difference in the profile of satisfaction recorded for those whose cases had been dropped (27% had been satisfied) compared with those whose cases had resulted in a formal caution/warning (66% had been satisfied) (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.1: Proportion of respondents who reported being contacted by the Police or the PPS and told the reasons for their case outcome (%)

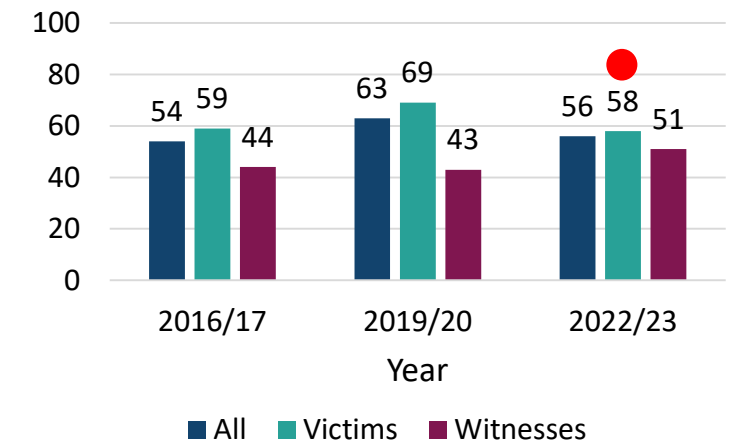


Figure 7.2: Respondents who were satisfied with the outcome of their case (%)

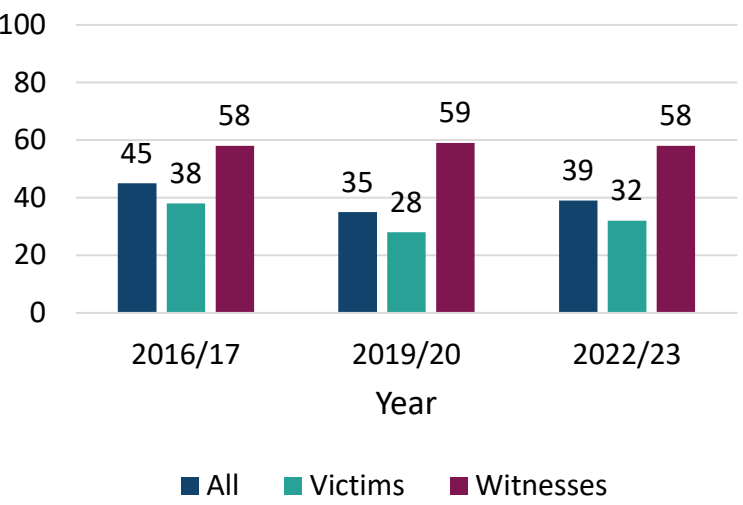
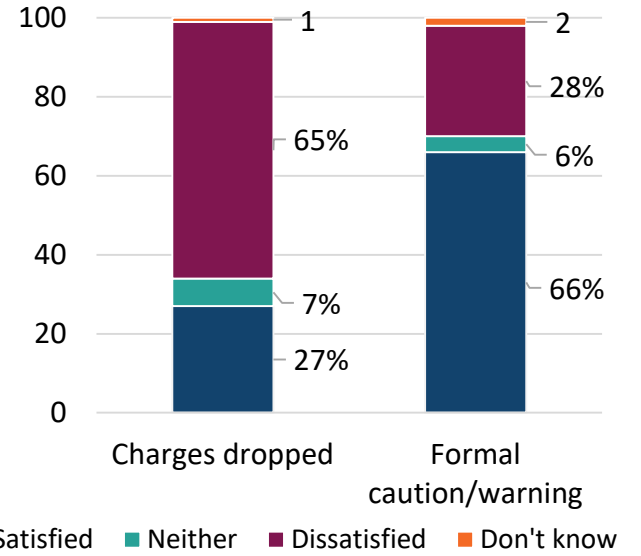


Figure 7.3: Profile of satisfaction for (i) those whose cases were dropped and (ii) those whose cases resulted in a formal caution/warning, 2022/23 (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses involved in cases which were dropped or had resulted in a caution/warning being issued (applies to all charts on this page)

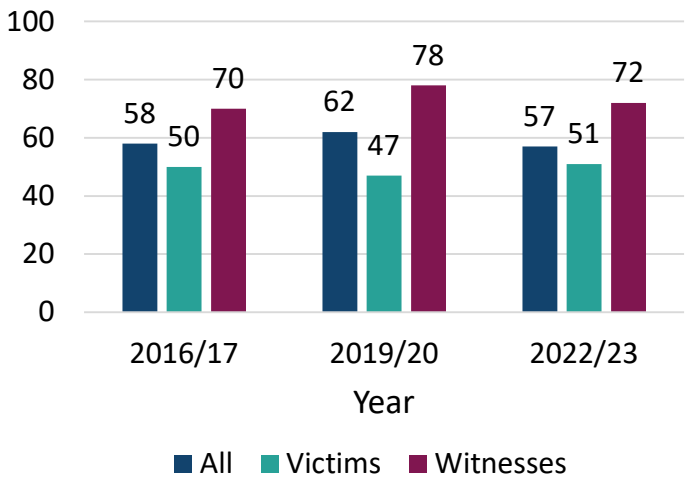
This section outlines the findings related to the pre-trial experiences of respondents. It addresses the requirement to attend court, the pre-trial concerns of those required to attend court and the information provided to victims and witnesses in the lead up to the trial.

8. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Compared with 2019/20, there were no significant changes in 2022/23 in either the proportion of respondents reporting that they had been asked to give evidence at the trial/hearing (Figure 8.1) or in the proportion of respondents who reported having ultimately given evidence (Figure 8.2).

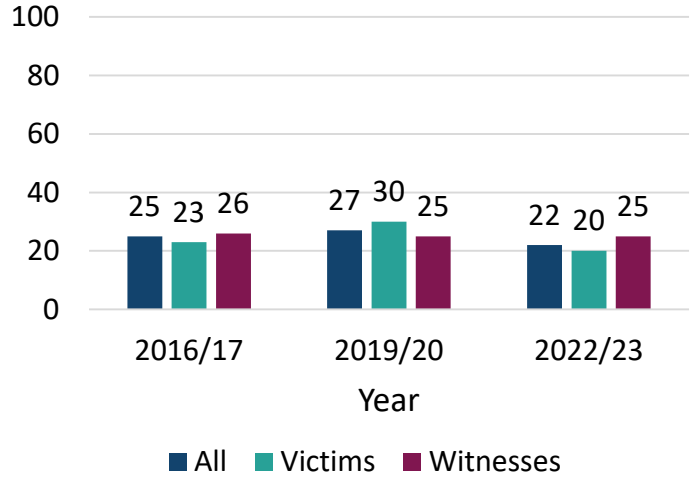
There were, however, significant reductions in the proportions of respondents who actually attended the trial/hearing at both overall level (down from 50% to 41%) and at witness level (down from 64% to 51%) (Figure 8.3).

Figure 8.1: Proportion of respondents asked to give evidence at the trial/hearing (%)



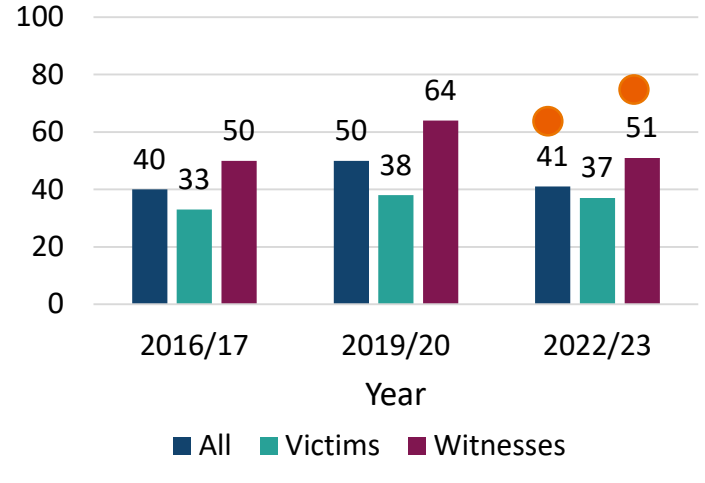
1. Asked of all victims and witnesses involved in cases which progressed to trial/hearing

Figure 8.2: Proportion of respondents who gave evidence at the trial/hearing (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence at the trial/hearing

Figure 8.3: Proportion of respondents who attended the trial/hearing (%)

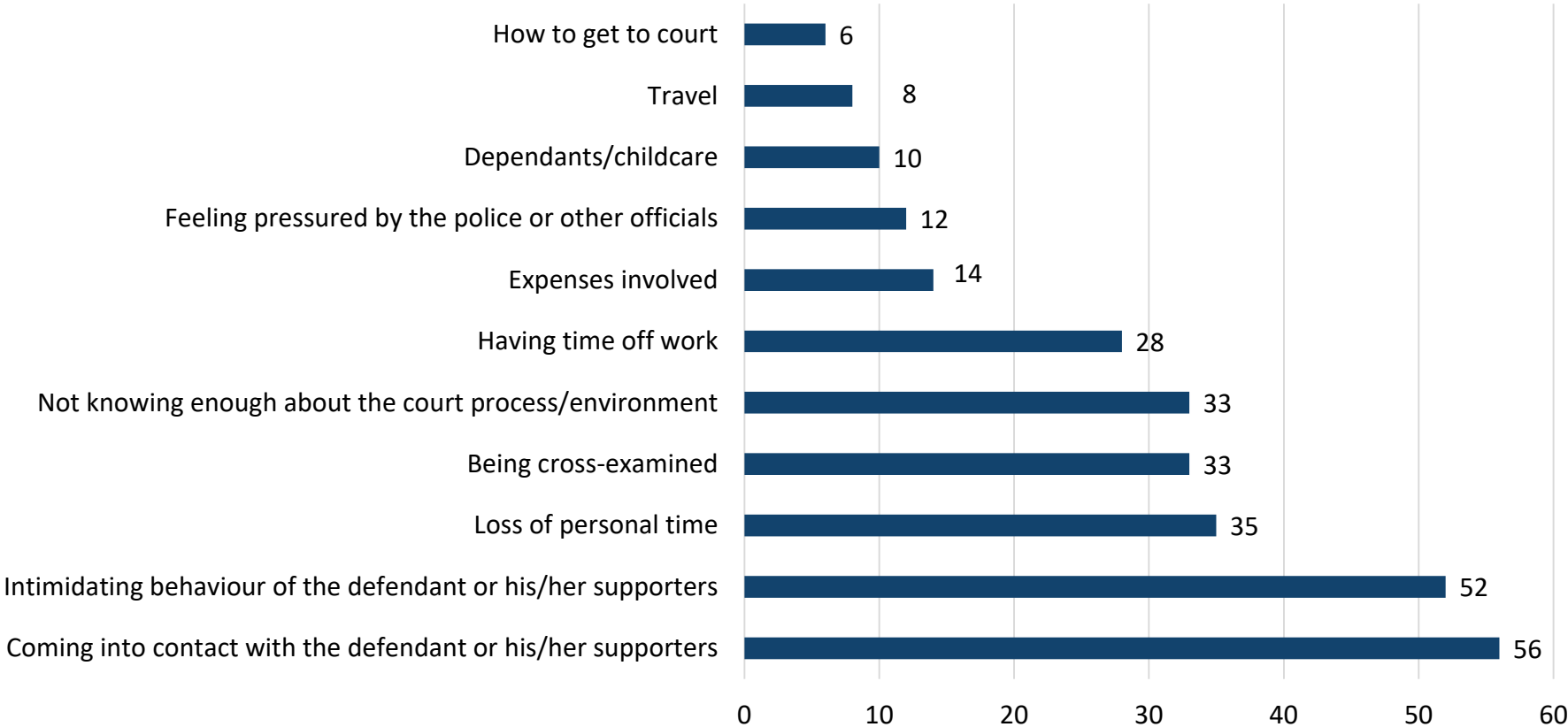


1. Asked of all victims and witnesses involved in cases which progressed to trial/hearing

9. PRE-TRIAL CONCERNS ABOUT ATTENDING COURT

Survey respondents were asked whether they had any concerns on a range of measures related to court attendance. The two concerns most frequently identified by respondents to the 2022/23 survey related to potential contact with the defendant or his/her supporters (cited by 56% of survey respondents) and fear of intimidation from the defendant or his/her supporters (52%) (Figure 9.1).

Figure 9.1: Proportion of respondents who expressed a range of concerns related to court attendance, 2022/23 (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence and who attended court

9. PRE-TRIAL CONCERNS ABOUT ATTENDING COURT

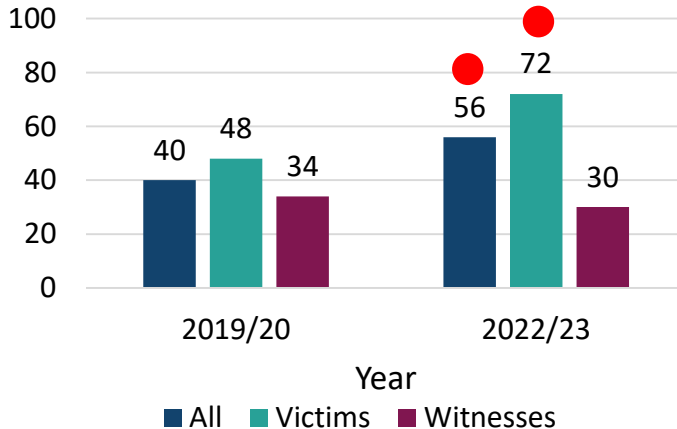
There were some significant changes recorded in the proportion of respondents who reported that they had concern around certain aspects of court attendance (Figures 9.2a to 9.2d).

These were as follows:-

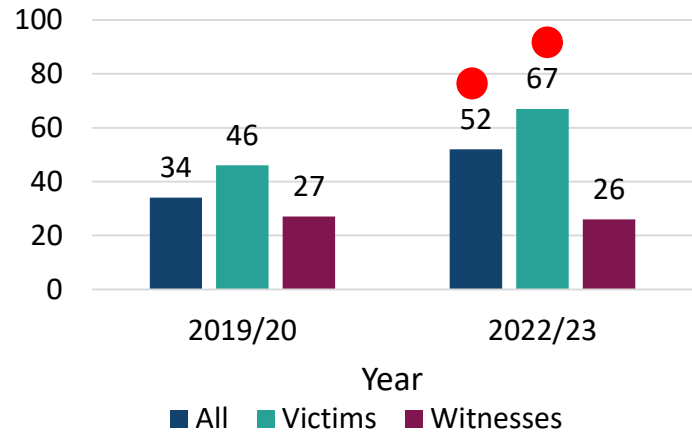
- Coming into contact with the defendant or his/her supporters**
Compared with 2019/20, the proportion of respondents expressing concern increased significantly at both overall level (up from 40% to 56%) and at victim level (up from 48% to 72%) (Figure 9.2a).
- Intimidating behaviour of the defendant or his/her supporters**
Here again, there were significant increases in the proportions expressing concern at both overall level (up from 34% to 52%) and at victim level (up from 46% to 67%)(Figure 9.2b).
- Travel**
The proportion of witnesses who expressed concern fell significantly (from 6% in 2019/20 to 0% in 2022/23)(Figure 9.2c).
- Expenses involved**
There was also a significant fall in the proportion of witnesses who expressed concern about the expenses involved (down from 14% in 2019/20 to 4% in 2022/23)(Figure 9.2d).

Figure 9.2: Concerns about attending court where there was significant change between 2019/20 and 2022/23 (%)

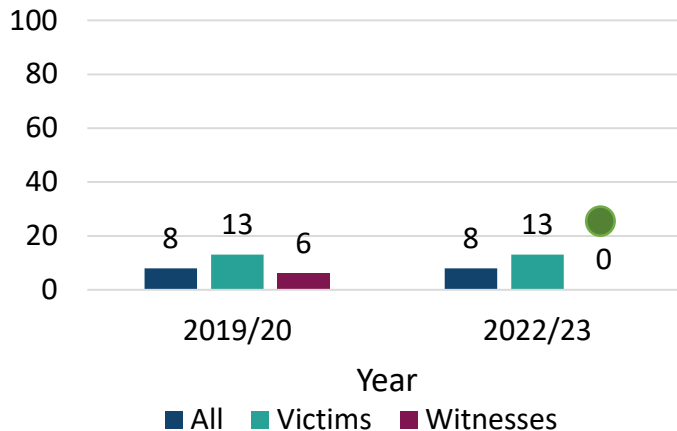
(a) Coming into contact with the defendant or his/her supporters



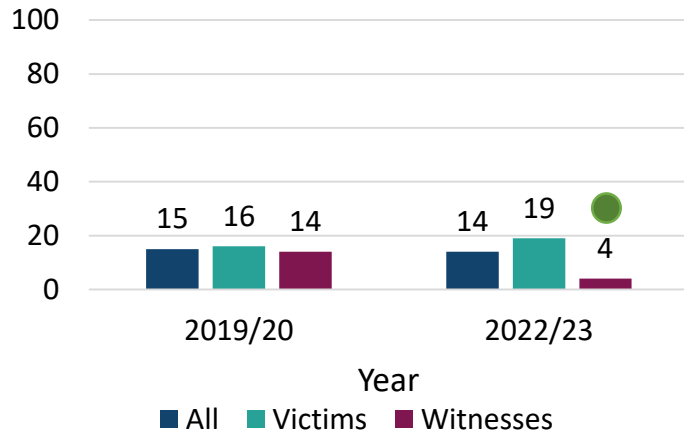
(b) Intimidating behaviour of defendant or his/her supporters



(c) Travel



(d) Expenses involved



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence and who attended court (applies to all charts on this page)

10. NOTIFICATION OF COURT DATE

In 2022/23, the greater proportion of respondents (42%) reported that they had received over one month’s notification of the court date; a further 37% reported receiving between 2 and 4 weeks notice and 18% received less than 2 weeks notice; the remaining 3% of respondents were unable to recall how much notice they had been given (Figure 10.1). The timescales within which respondents received notification of the court date did not vary significantly between 2019/20 and 2022/23 (Figure 10.2).

Figure 10.1: Notification period for court date, 2022/23 (%)

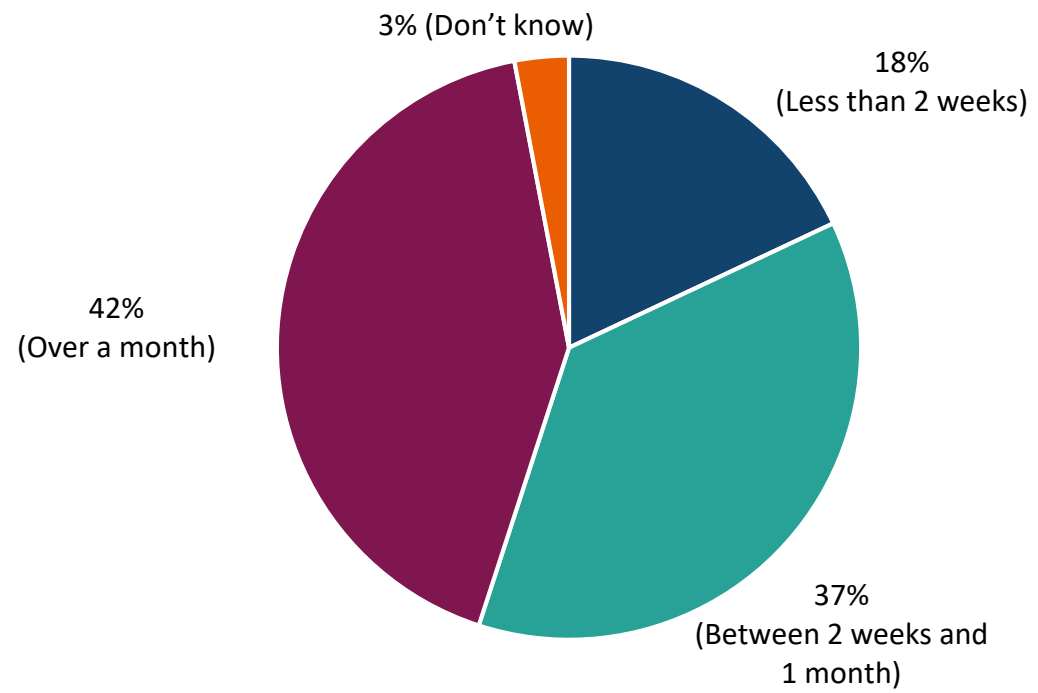
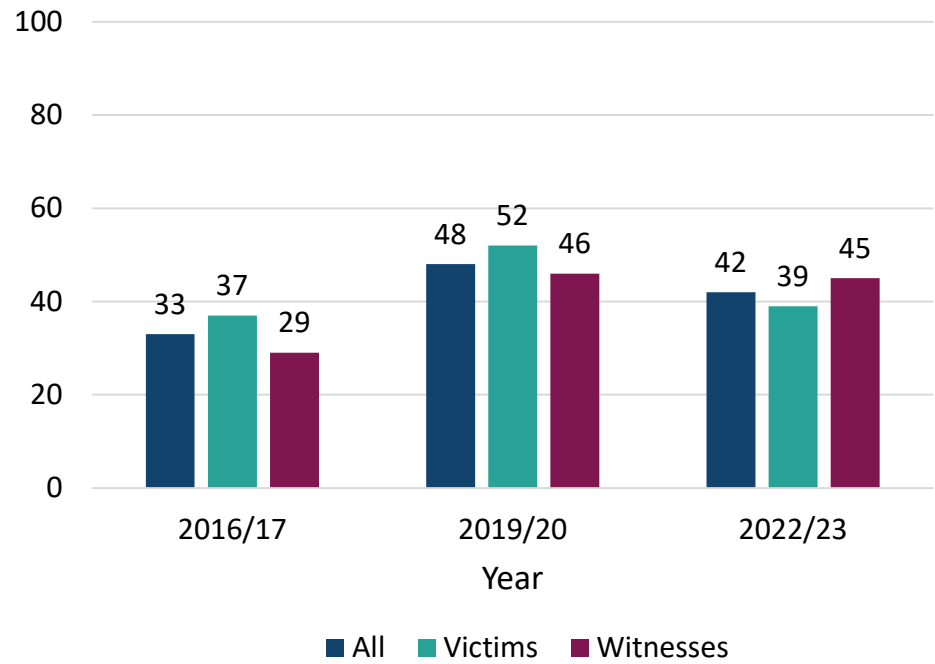


Figure 10.2: Proportion of respondents informed of the court date over a month before the trial (%)

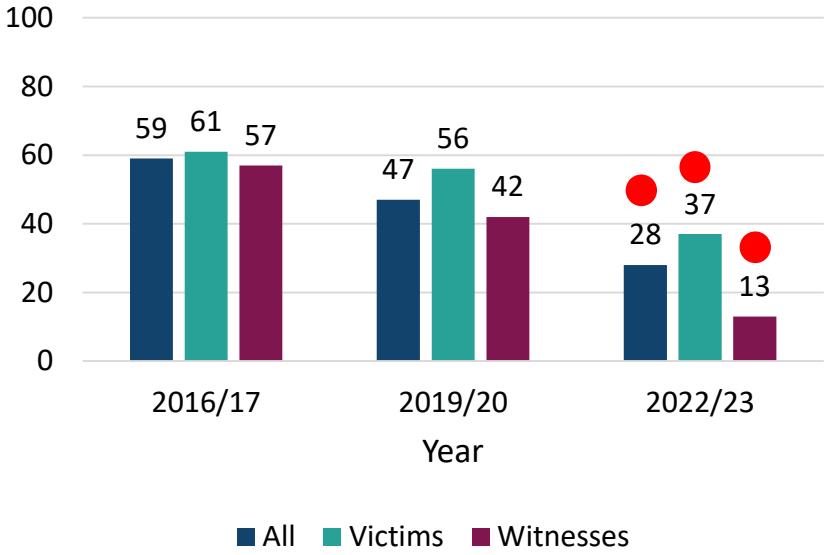


1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who had been informed of the trial date (applies to both charts on this page)

11. PRE-TRIAL COURT FAMILIARISATION VISIT

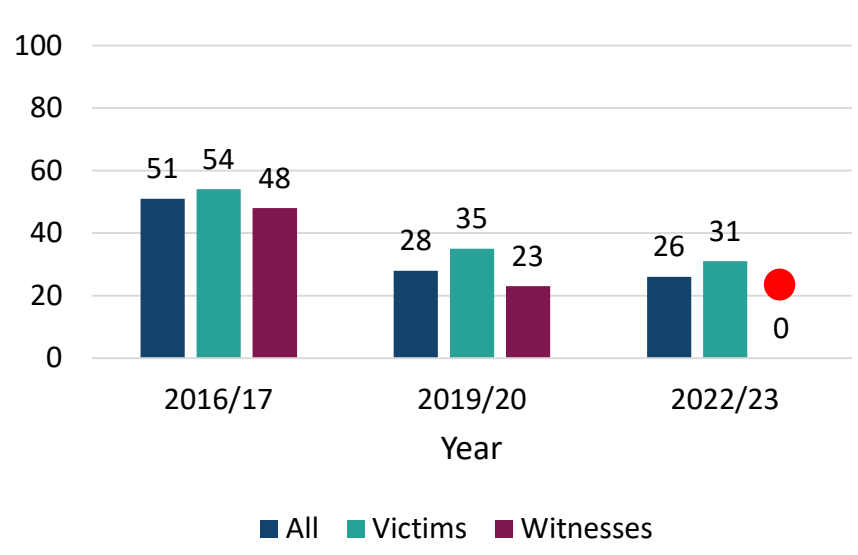
Compared with 2019/20, there were significant falls in 2022/23 at overall level, and at both victim and witness levels in the proportion of respondents who reported having been offered the opportunity to visit the court in advance for familiarisation purposes (Figure 11.1). Overall, the proportion reporting that they had been offered a visit fell from 47% in 2019/20 to 28% in 2022/23. For victims, the proportion fell from 56% to 37%, and, for witnesses, the proportion fell from 42% to 13%.
 With regard to uptake of the pre-trial familiarisation visit, there was a significant reduction in 2022/23 in the proportion of witnesses availing of the opportunity (down from 23% in 2019/20 to 0% in 2022/23)(Figure 11.2).

Figure 11.1: Proportion of respondents offered the opportunity to visit the court in advance for familiarisation purposes (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence and who attended court

Figure 11.2: Proportion of respondents who accepted the offer of a pre-trial court familiarisation visit (%)



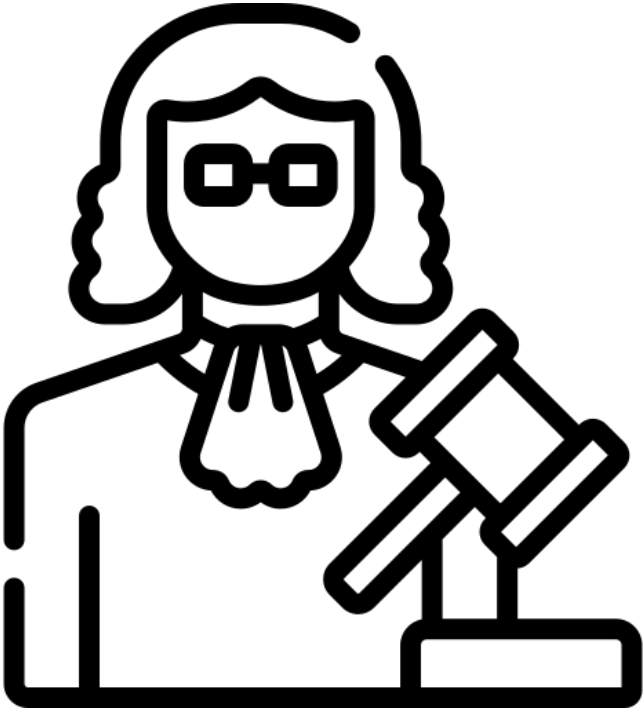
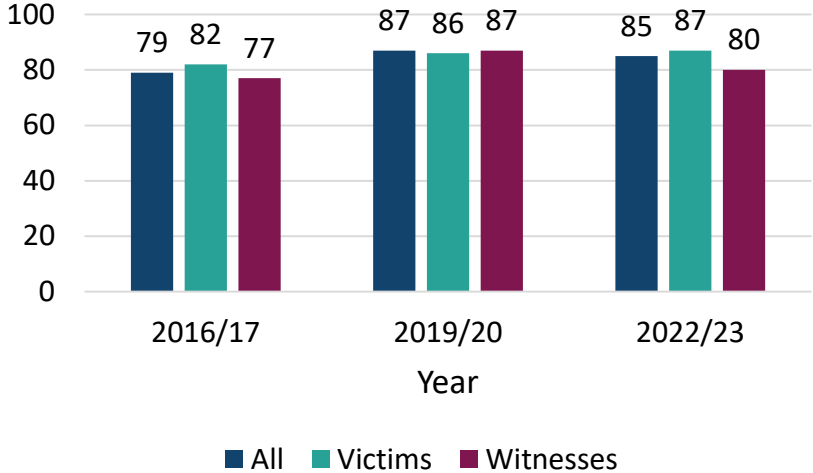
1. Asked of all victims and witnesses offered a pre-trial court familiarisation visit

12. INFORMATION RECEIVED IN THE LEAD UP TO THE TRIAL

(i) Receipt of original statement/opportunity to view video recorded statement in advance of the court case commencing

The proportion of respondents who reported having received a copy of their original statement to the police or of having had the opportunity to view the video of their recorded statement has not changed significantly compared with 2019/20 (Figure 12.1).

Figure 12.1: Proportion of respondents who received a copy of their original statement/had the opportunity to view the video of their recorded statement before the court case (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence and who attended court

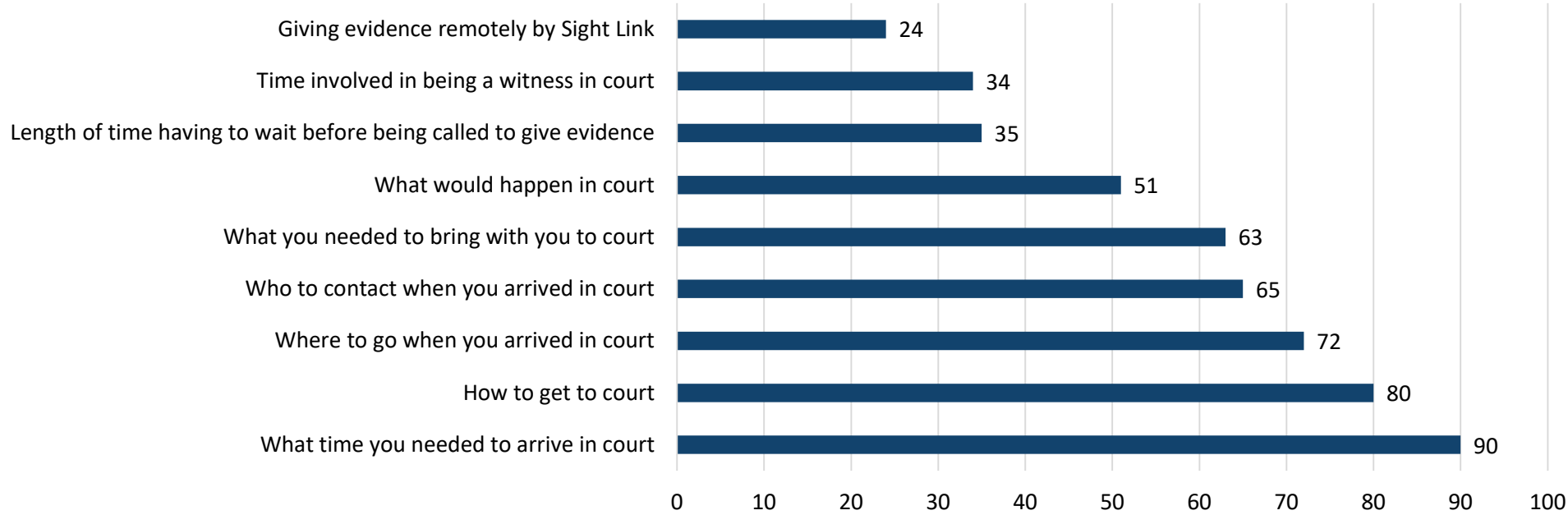
12. INFORMATION RECEIVED IN THE LEAD UP TO THE TRIAL

(ii) Adequacy of information provided in relation to court attendance

Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they had received adequate information on a range of dimensions related to court attendance.

As seen in Figure 12.2, respondents to the 2022/23 survey were most likely to report having received adequate information in relation to the time they needed to arrive at court (90%) and how to get to court (80%). The three areas where they were least likely to report having received adequate information were giving evidence remotely by Sight Link (24%), the time involved in being a witness in court (34%) and the length of time to wait before being called to give evidence (35%).

Figure 12.2: Proportion of respondents who reported having received adequate information on a range of aspects related to court attendance, 2022/23 (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence and who attended court

12. INFORMATION RECEIVED IN THE LEAD UP TO THE TRIAL

(iii) Proportion who had received adequate information on each of the areas

Compared with 2019/20, there were some significant changes recorded in the proportion of respondents reporting that they had received adequate information on a range of the dimensions considered. These were as follows:-

- [Time involved in being a witness in court](#)

Compared with 2019/20, there was a significant fall in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents reporting that they had received enough information (down from 49% to 34%) (Figure 12.3a overleaf).

- [What you needed to bring with you to court](#)

There was a significant fall in 2022/23 in the proportion of witnesses who felt they had been given enough information (down from 74% to 52%) (Figure 12.3b overleaf).

- [What time you needed to arrive at court](#)

There were significant reductions at both overall and at victim levels in the proportion of respondents who felt they had been given enough information (Overall – down from 97% to 90%; Victims – down from 98% to 91%) (Figure 12.3c overleaf).

- [Who to contact on arrival at court](#)

There was a significant reduction in 2022/23 in the proportion of witnesses who felt they had been given adequate information (down from 76% to 57%) (Figure 12.3d overleaf).

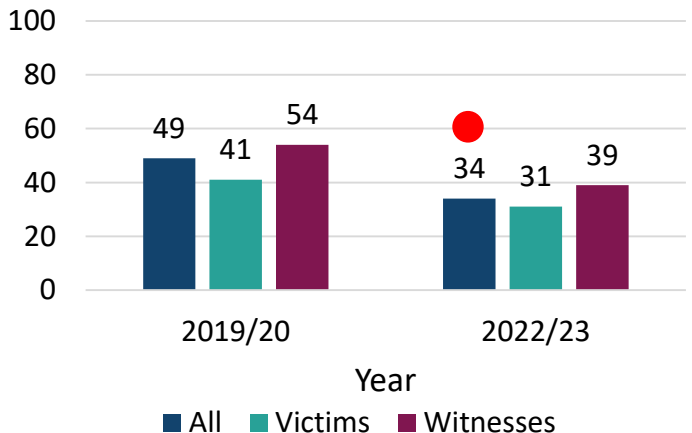
- [What would happen in court](#)

At overall level, there was a significant reduction in the proportion of respondents who reported having received adequate information (down from 64% to 51%) (Figure 12.3e overleaf).

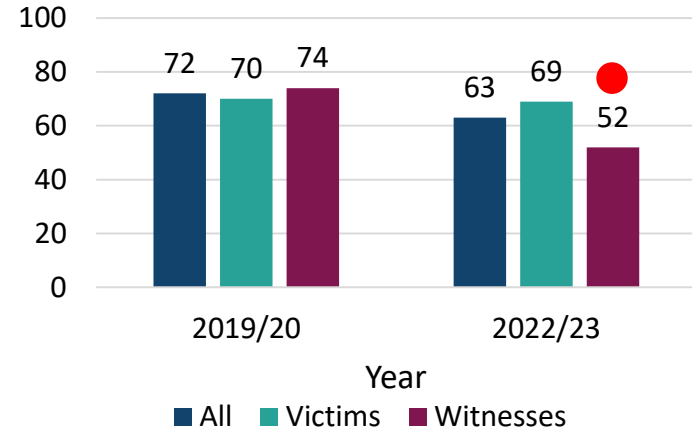
12. INFORMATION RECEIVED IN THE LEAD UP TO THE TRIAL

Figure 12.3: Dimensions related to court attendance where there was significant change in 2022/23 compared with 2019/20 in the proportion of respondents stating that they had received adequate information (%)

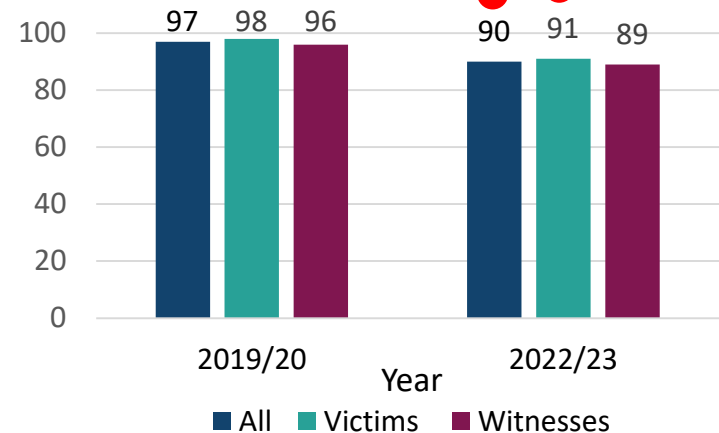
(a) Time involved in being a witness in court (%)



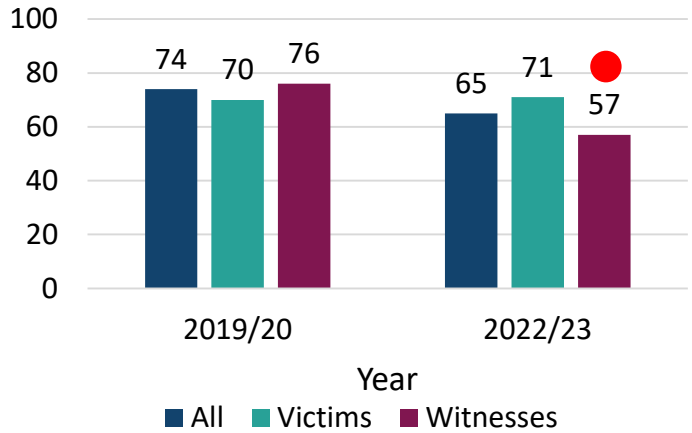
(b) What you needed to bring with you to court (%)



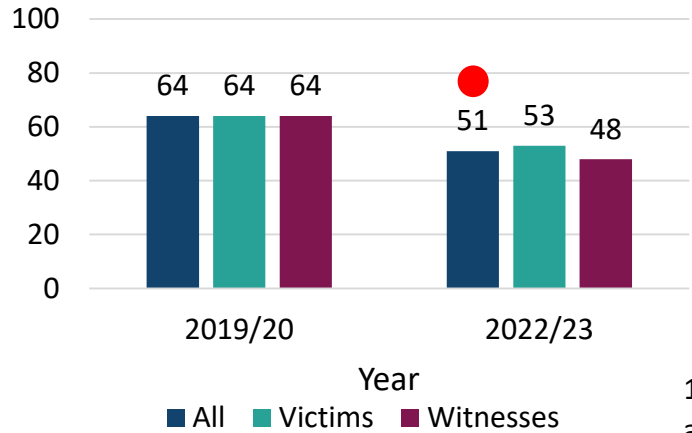
(c) The time you needed to arrive at court (%)



(d) Who to contact on arrival at court (%)



(e) What would happen at court (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence and who attended court (applies to all charts on this page)

13. SATISFACTION WITH HOW DEALT WITH IN THE LEAD UP TO THE TRIAL

(i) Satisfaction with the information received in preparation for court

Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents satisfied with the information received to prepare them for going to court (Figure 13.1).

(ii) Satisfaction with how dealt with prior to attending court

The 79% of respondents in 2022/23 who were satisfied with how they had been dealt with prior to attending court represented a significant fall compared with the 88% of respondents who had been satisfied in 2019/20 (Figures 13.2 and 13.3).

Figure 13.1: Proportion of respondents satisfied with the information received in preparation for court (%)

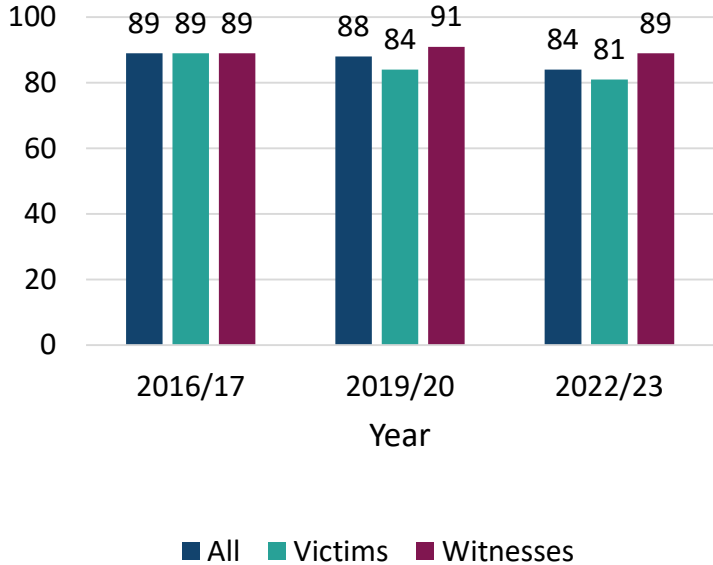


Figure 13.2: Proportion of respondents satisfied with how they had been dealt with prior to attending court (%)

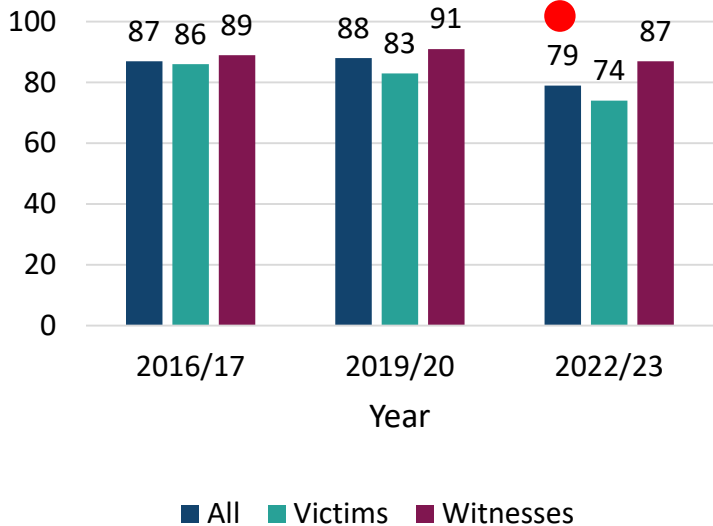
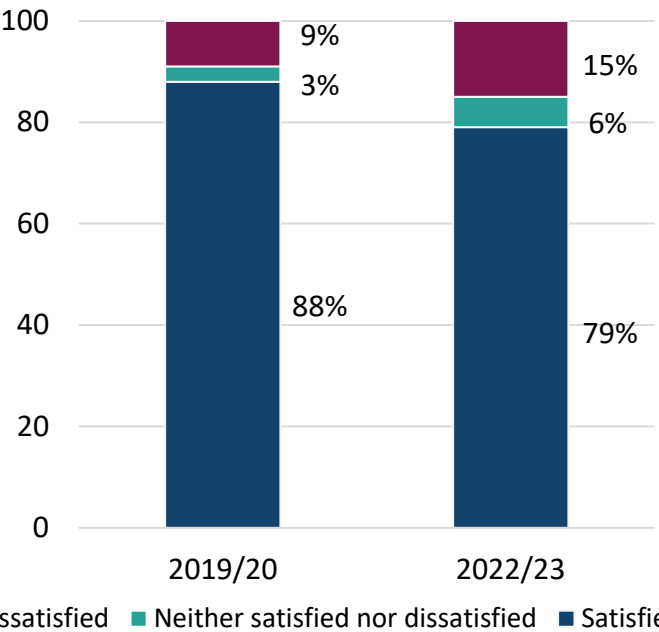


Figure 13.3: Profile of respondent satisfaction ratings for how they had been dealt with prior to attending court (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence and who attended court (applies to all charts on this page)

This section outlines the findings relating to various aspects of the court experience. It covers respondent views on attendance at court, the waiting times involved, their understanding of what was happening at court, the consideration shown to them while at court, how safe they felt and also their views on the case outcome and any sentence imposed.

14. ATTENDANCE AT COURT

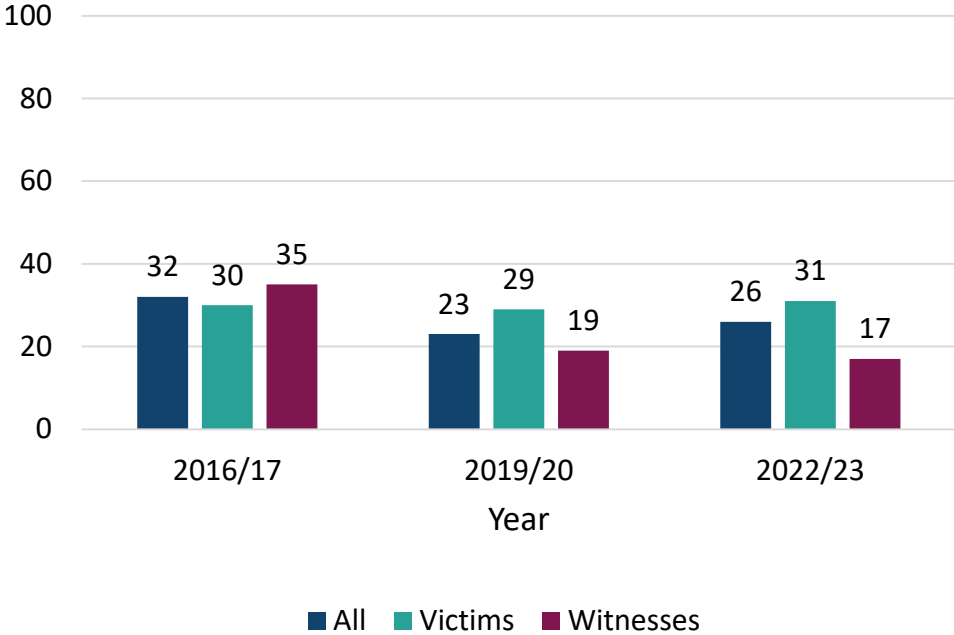
(i) Number of days required to attend court

In 2022/23, the vast majority of respondents (73%) had just been required to attend court on the one day (Table 1). Compared with 2019/20, there was no substantive change in the proportion of respondents who reported having had to attend on more than one day (Figure 14.1).

Table 1: Number of days respondents had to attend court, 2022/23 (%)

Days	2022/23 (%)
1 day	73
2 days	15
3 days	6
4 days	3
5 or more days	2
Don't know	1
Base (n)	124

Figure 14.1: Proportion of respondents who reported having to attend court for more than one day (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence and who attended court (applies to both the table and the chart on this page)

14. ATTENDANCE AT COURT

(ii) Number of days giving evidence

Of respondents asked to attend court to give evidence in 2022/23, the majority (65%) reported not ultimately having had to give evidence; the remainder (35%) reported only having to give evidence on one day (Figures 14.2).

Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents reporting that they did not have to give evidence (Figure 14.3).

Figure 14.2: Number of days respondents had to give evidence, 2022/23 (%)

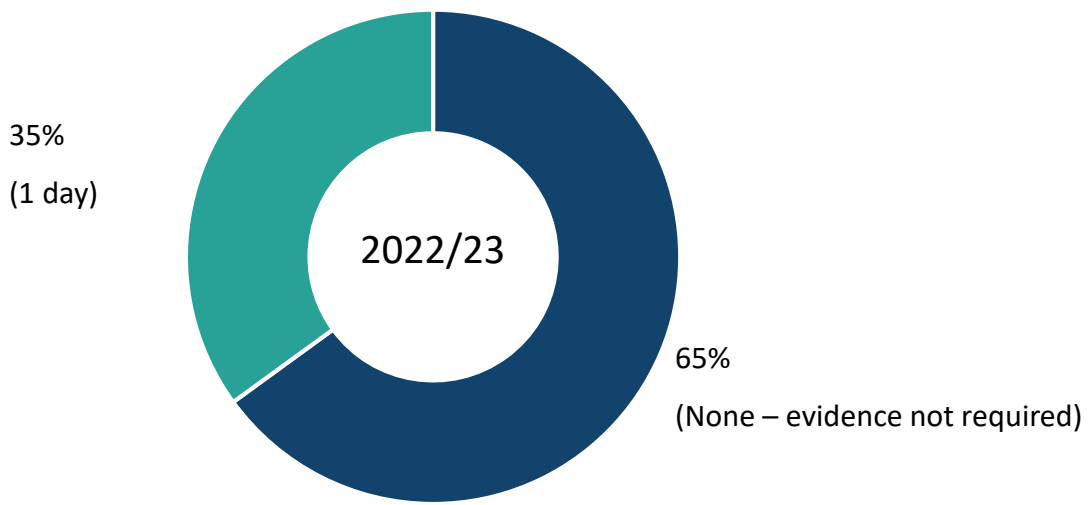
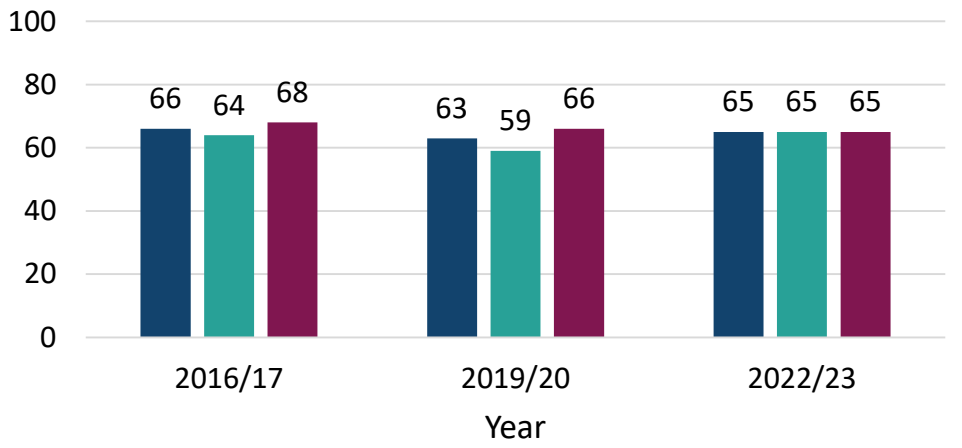


Figure 14.3: Proportion of respondents who reported not being required to give evidence (%)



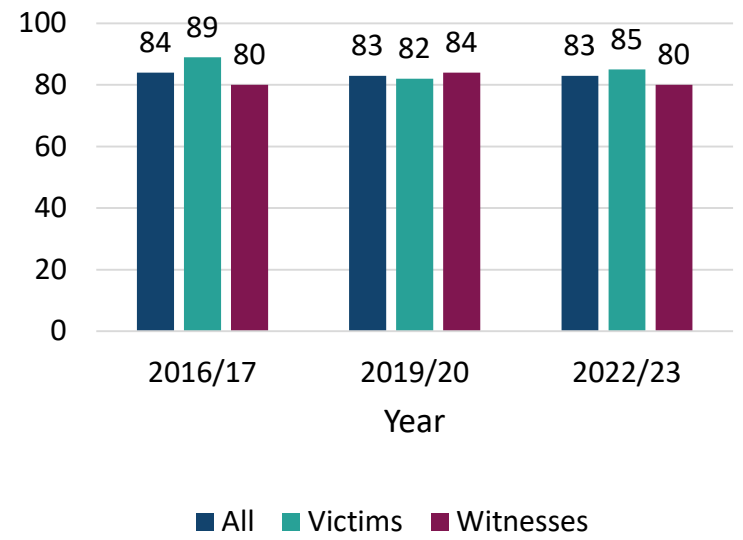
■ All ■ Victims ■ Witnesses

1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence and who attended court (applies to both charts on this page)

15. WAITING TIME AT COURT

(i) Waiting room at court
 Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents reporting that they had been put in a separate waiting room from the witnesses for the other side (Figure 15.1).

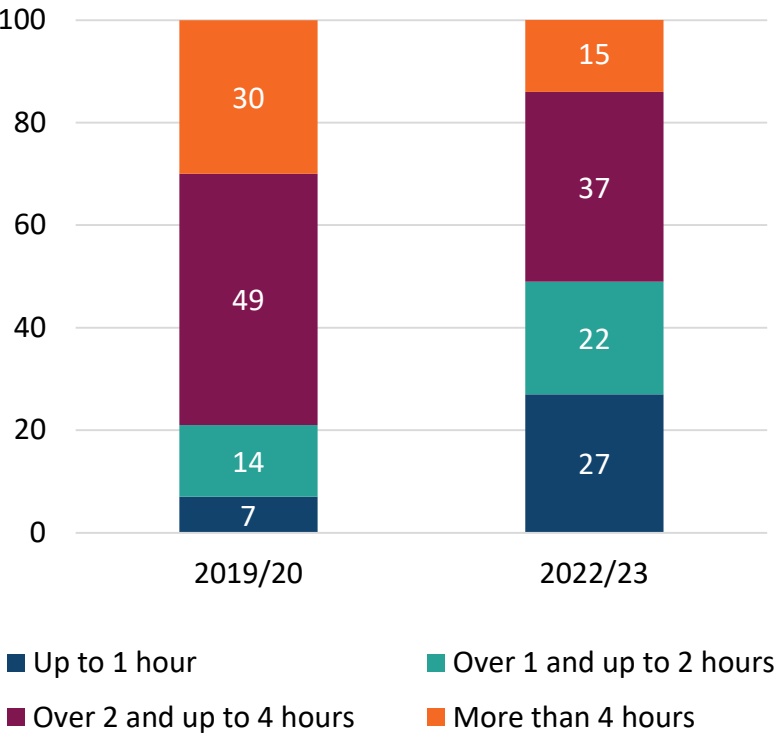
Figure 15.1: Proportion of respondents reporting that they had been put in a separate waiting room from the witnesses from the other side whilst waiting at court (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who attended court

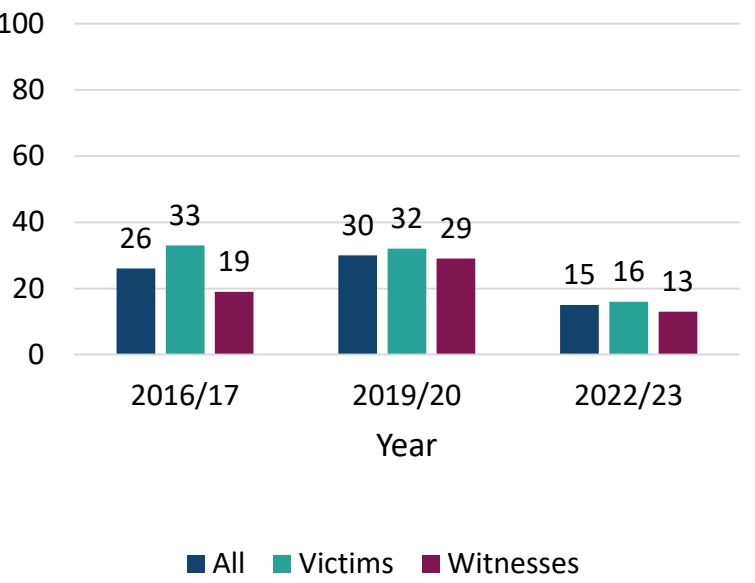
(ii) Waiting time at court to give evidence on first day of giving evidence
 Figure 15.2 shows the timespans respondents reported having had to wait at court before being called to give their evidence.
 Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who reported having had to wait more than 4 hours before giving their evidence (Figure 15.3).

Figure 15.2: Waiting time to give evidence (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who ultimately gave evidence (applies to Figures 15.2 and 15.3)

Figure 15.3: Proportion of respondents who, on the first day of giving evidence, had to wait more than 4 hours before giving evidence (%)



15. WAITING TIME AT COURT

(iii) Updates while waiting at court

In 2022/23, the majority of respondents (65%) reported being given either hourly (41%) or more frequent (24%) updates while waiting to give evidence at court (Figure 15.4).

Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents reporting that they had received hourly or more frequent updates (Figure 15.5).

Figure 15.4: Frequency of updates while waiting to give evidence at court, 2022/23 (%)

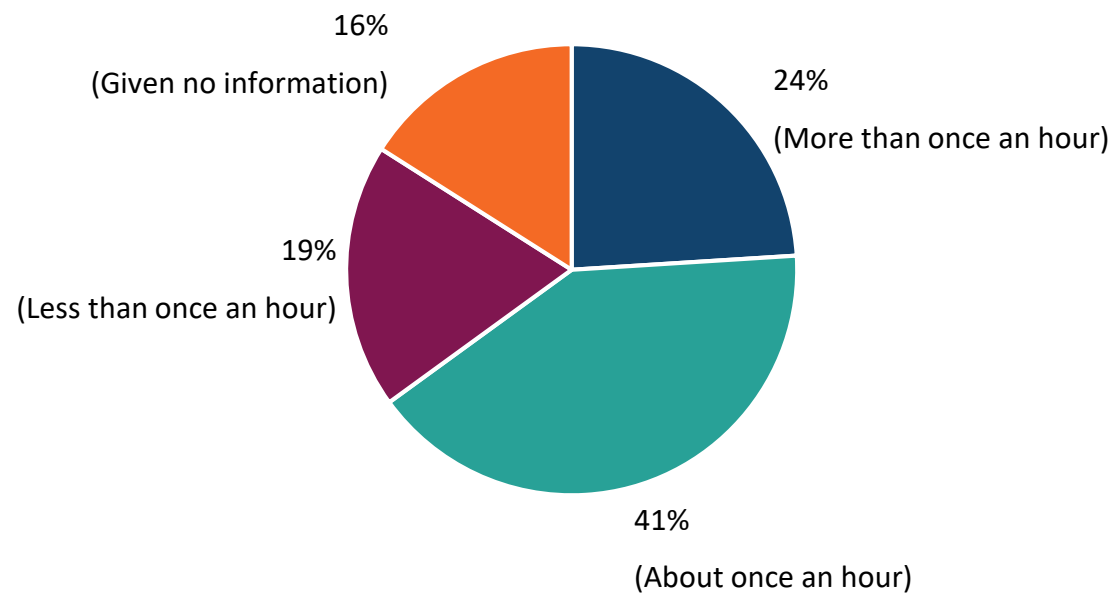
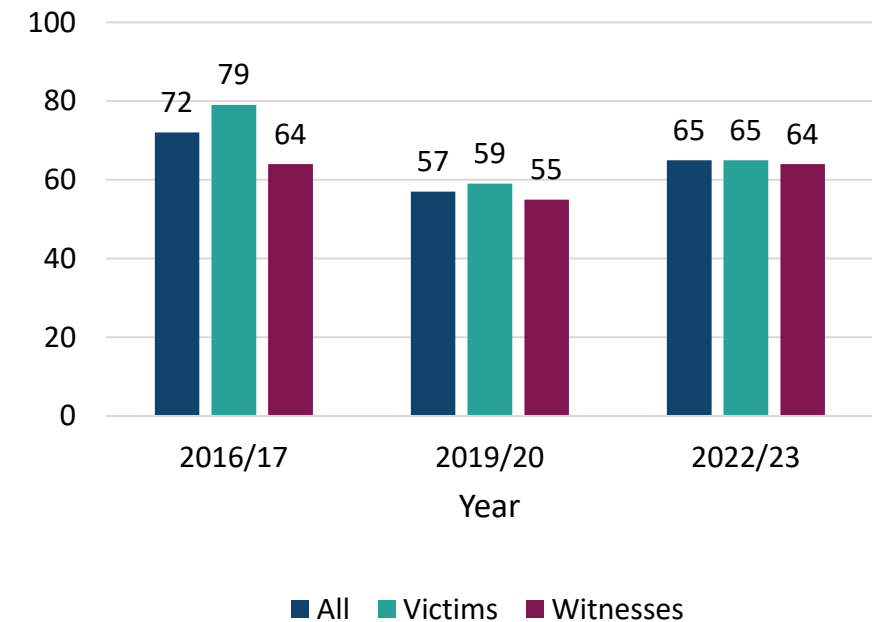


Figure 15.5: Proportion of respondents who reported having been given hourly or more frequent updates while waiting at court (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who ultimately gave evidence but excluding those not waiting long enough to need an update (applies to both charts on this page)

15. WAITING TIME AT COURT

(iv) Advance notification when evidence not needed

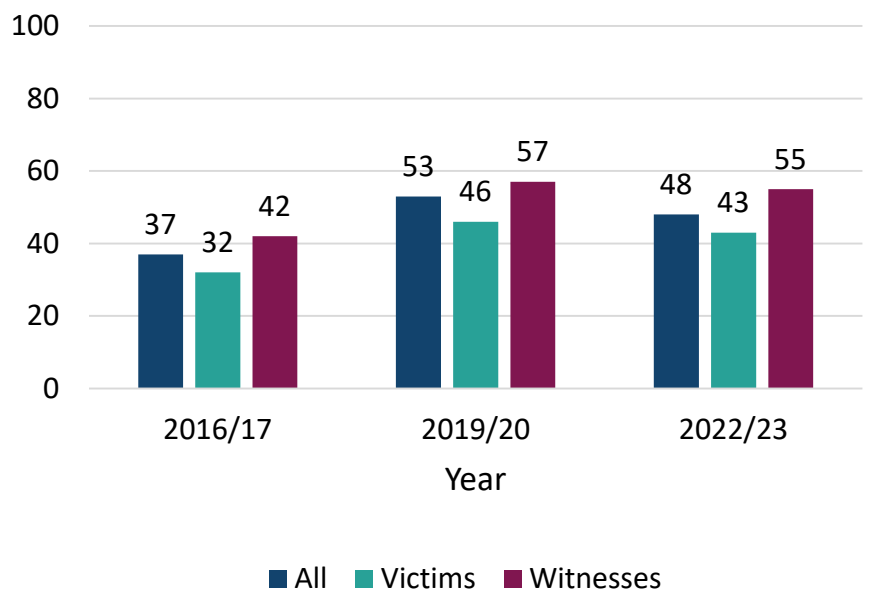
In 2022/23, one fifth of respondents whose evidence was not needed had been advised of this before the trial date or at least before arriving at court on the trial date. At the other extreme, almost half (48%) of respondents reported having waited for 2 or more hours at court before being advised that their evidence would not be required (Table 2).

Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who reported having had to wait for 2 or more hours at court before being advised that their evidence would not be needed (Figure 15.6).

Table 2: Stage at which respondents were told their evidence would not be needed, 2022/23 (%)

Timescale	2022/23 (%)
Two or more days before the trial date	13
One day before the trial date	1
Before arriving at court on the trial date	6
Immediately after arriving at court on the trial date	4
After waiting for up to 1 hour at court	11
After waiting for 1 to 2 hours at court	17
After waiting for 2 hours or more at court	48
Don't know	1
Base (n)	84

Figure 15.6: Proportion of respondents who waited 2 or more hours at court before being told their evidence was not needed (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence but subsequently told evidence not needed (applies to both the table and the chart on this page)

15. WAITING TIME AT COURT

(iv) Reason/s for evidence not being needed

As for previous sweeps of NIVAWS, the main reason for evidence not being needed in 2022/23 was due to the defendant pleading guilty (cited by 65% of respondents)(Table 3).

The two other more frequently cited reasons in 2022/23 were that the case already had sufficient evidence (9%) and that the defendant had failed to appear in court (8%).

Table 3: Reason/s for evidence not being needed (%)

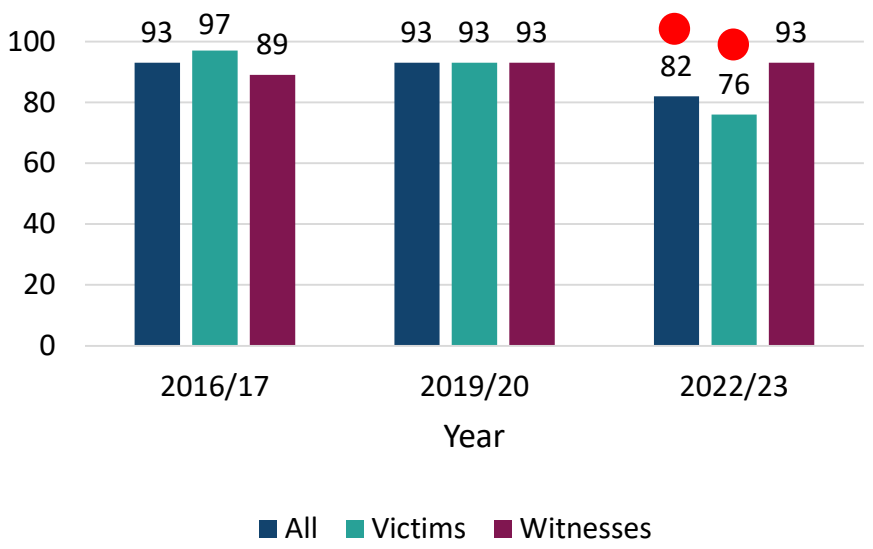
Reason	2019/20 (%)	2022/23 (%)
Defendant pleaded guilty	74	65
Defendant failed to appear in court	3	8
Prosecution withdrew case	5	1
Case already had sufficient evidence	6	9
Evidence/written statement read out/recorded on DVD	3	2
Problems with witnesses	2	1
Case settled before court	1	1
Other reason	4	6
No reason given	3	7
Don't know	0	1
Base (n)	160	85

1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence but subsequently told evidence not needed
2. Respondents could give more than one response

16. UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN COURT

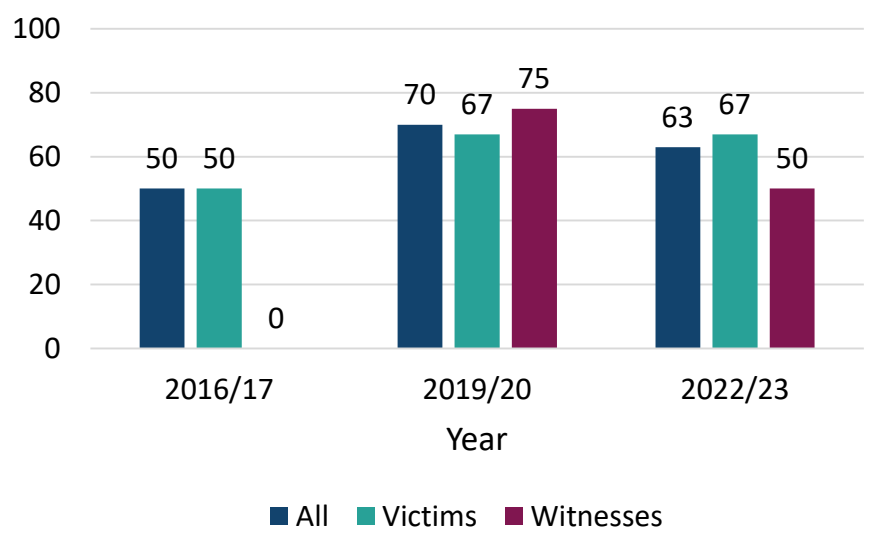
Of respondents asked to give evidence in court, there were significant falls at both overall and at victim levels in the proportion of respondents reporting that they had understood what was happening in court while they were there (Figure 16.1). Overall, the proportion fell from 93% to 82%; at victim level, the proportion fell from 93% to 76%.
 Of respondents not asked to give evidence but who attended court, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion reporting that they had understood what was happening at court while they were there (Figure 16.2).

Figure 16.1: Proportion of respondents asked to give evidence who reported understanding what was happening in court (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence and who attended court

Figure 16.2: Proportion of respondents not asked to give evidence who reported understanding what was happening in court (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses not asked to give evidence but who attended court

17. CONSIDERATION SHOWN TO VICTIMS AND WITNESSES AT COURT

(i) Satisfaction with consideration shown before giving evidence
 Compared with 2019/20, there has been no significant change in the proportion of respondents who reported being satisfied with the consideration shown to them before giving evidence in court (Figure 17.1).

(ii) Experience of CJS personnel – PPS lawyer
 Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who met the PPS lawyer before entering the court room (Figure 17.2).
 Additionally, of those who did meet the PPS lawyer, there was no significant change in the proportion who felt that he/she had been courteous in their treatment of them (Figure 17.3).

Figure 17.1: Proportion of respondents satisfied with the consideration shown to them before giving evidence in court (%)

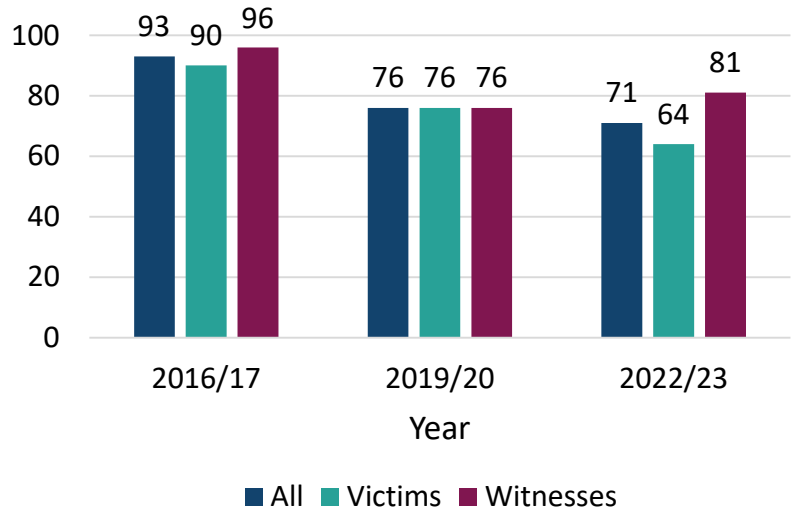


Figure 17.2: Proportion of respondents who met the PPS lawyer before entering the court room (%)

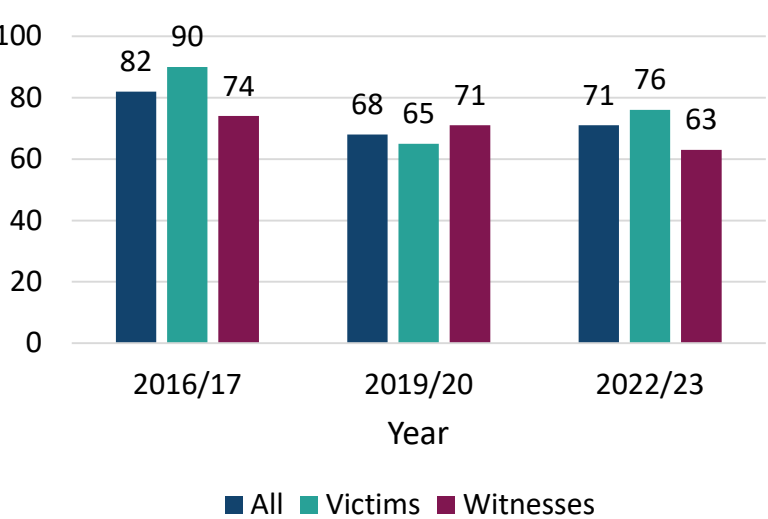
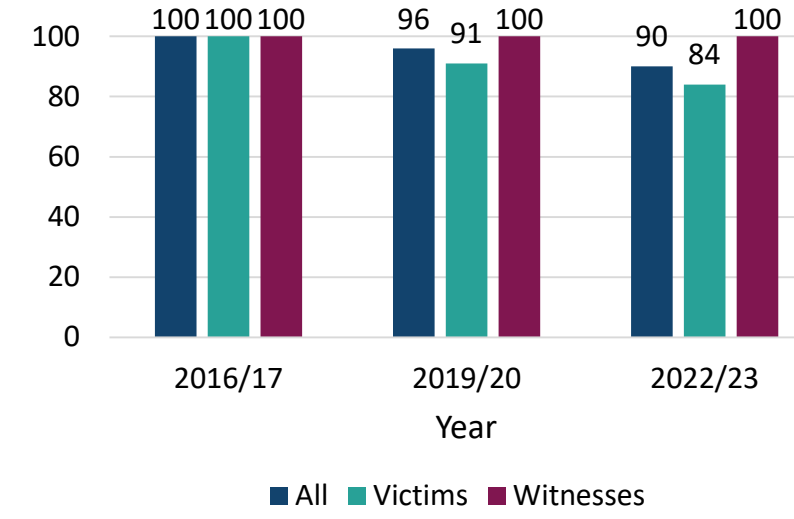


Figure 17.3: Proportion of respondents who felt that the PPS lawyer had been courteous towards them (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who ultimately gave evidence (applies to Figures 17.1 and 17.2)

1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who met the PPS lawyer before entering the court room

17. CONSIDERATION SHOWN TO VICTIMS AND WITNESSES AT COURT

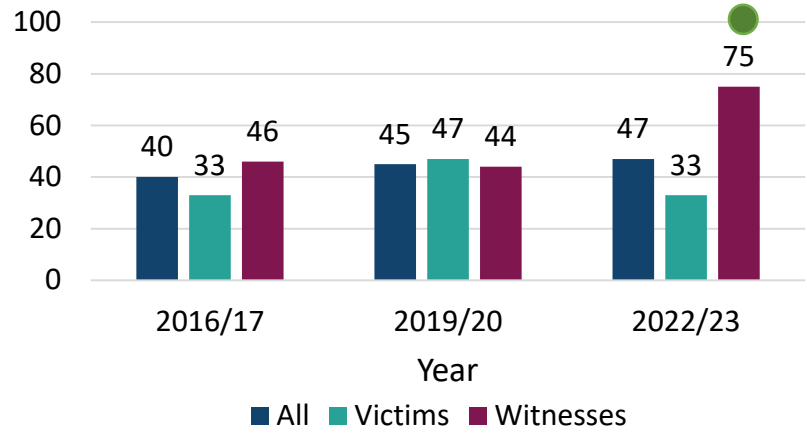
(iii) Experience of CJS personnel - Barrister for the other side

Compared with 2019/20, there was a significant increase in 2022/23 in the proportion of witnesses who felt that the barrister for the other side had been courteous towards them (up from 44% to 75%) (Fig 17.4).

(iv) Experience of CJS personnel - Magistrate or Judge

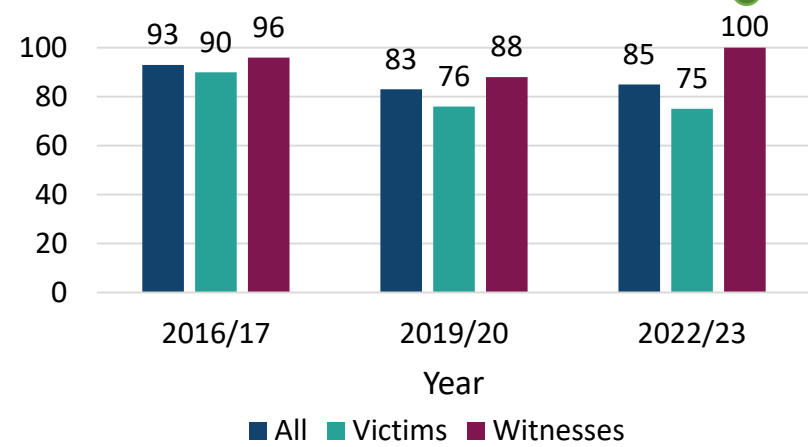
Similarly, there was a significant increase in the proportion of witnesses satisfied that the judge/magistrate had been courteous in their treatment of them (up from 88% in 2019/20 to 100% in 2022/23) (Fig 17.5).

Figure 17.4: Proportion of respondents who felt that the barrister for the other side had been courteous in their treatment of them (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who were cross-examined by the barrister for the other side

Figure 17.5: Proportion of respondents who felt that the magistrate or judge had been courteous in their treatment of them (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who ultimately gave evidence

17. CONSIDERATION SHOWN TO VICTIMS AND WITNESSES AT COURT

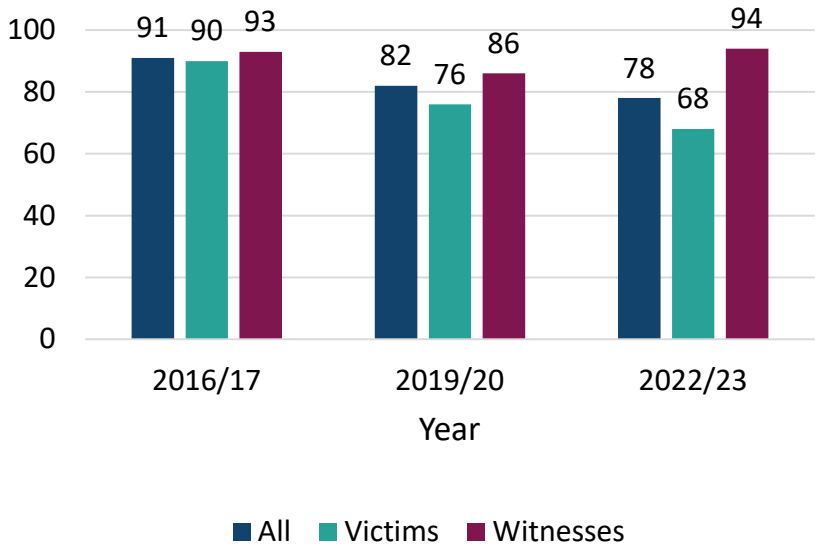
(v) Whether dealt with fairly or unfairly when giving evidence

Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who felt that they had been dealt with fairly whilst giving evidence (Figure 17.6).

(vi) Satisfaction with experience at court

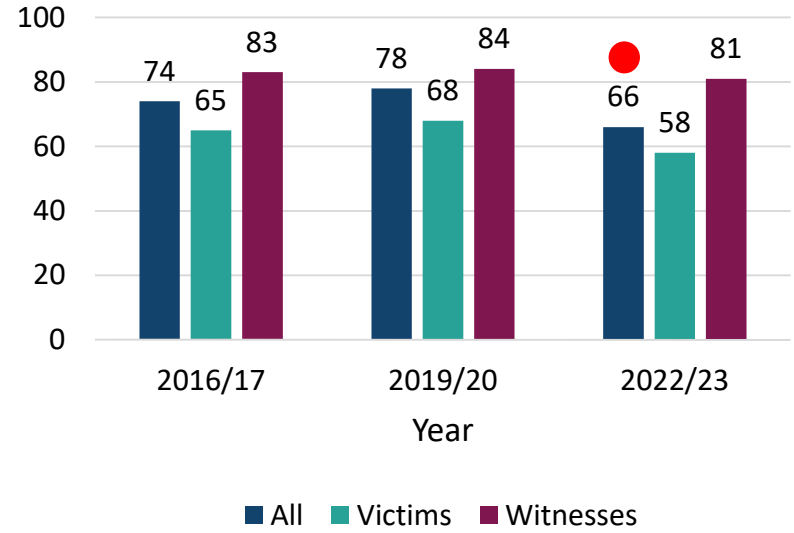
There was a significant fall in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents overall who reported having been satisfied with their experience at court (down from 78% in 2019/20 to 66% in 2022/23)(Figure 17.7).

Figure 17.6: Proportion of respondents who felt they had been dealt with fairly whilst giving evidence (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who ultimately gave evidence

Figure 17.7: Proportion of respondents satisfied with their experience at court (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who attended court

18. FEELINGS OF SAFETY

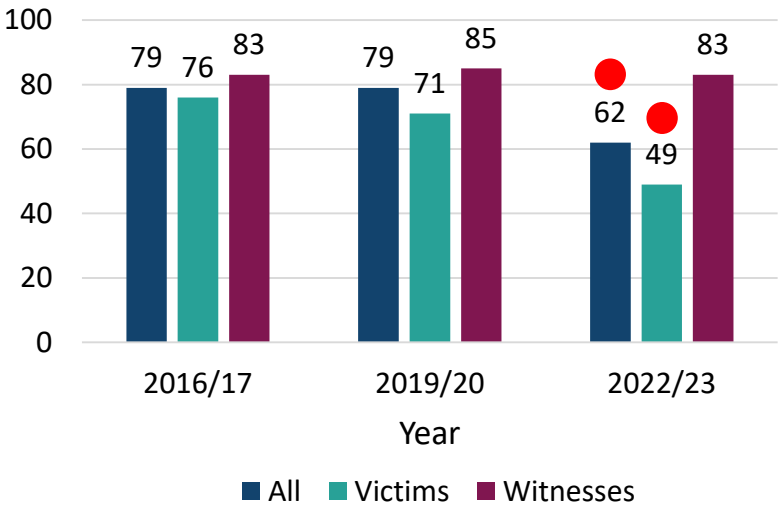
(i) Feelings of safety before going to court

Compared with 2019/20, there were significant falls in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents overall who felt safe before going to court (down from 79% to 62%) and in the proportion of victims who felt safe (down from 71% to 49%)(Figure 18.1).

(ii) Feelings of safety in the court room

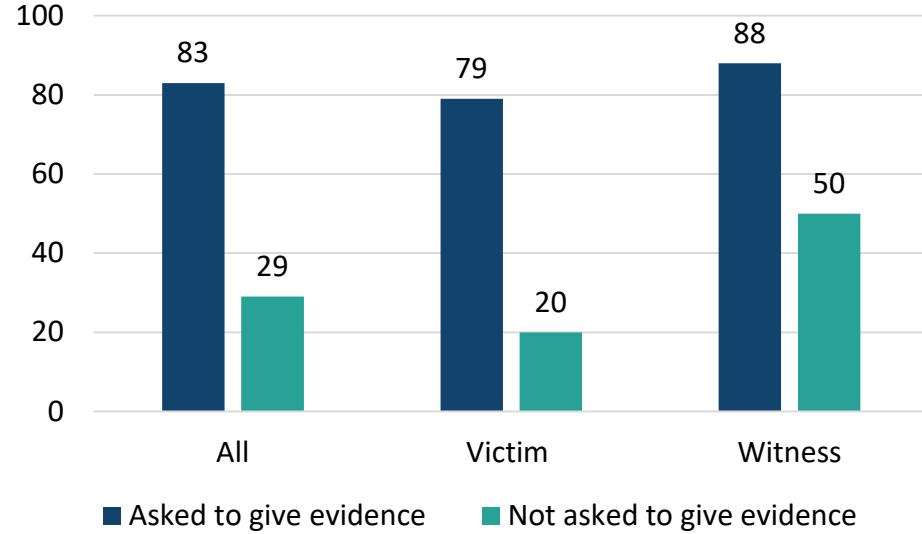
In 2022/23, 83% of respondents asked to give evidence reported feeling safe in court; this compared with the equivalent figure of 29% for those not asked to give evidence (Figure 18.2). Compared with 2019/20, there were no significant changes in 2022/23 in the proportions of respondents who felt safe in the court room; this was the case for both those asked to give evidence, and also for those not asked to give evidence (see Tables 18.3 and 18a.3 in excel file for breakdown of the figures for 2016/17 and 2019/20).

Figure 18.1: Proportion of respondents who reported feeling safe before going into court (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who attended court

Figure 18.2: Proportion of respondents who reported feeling safe while in the court room, 2022/23 (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who ultimately gave evidence and also those not asked to give evidence but who attended court

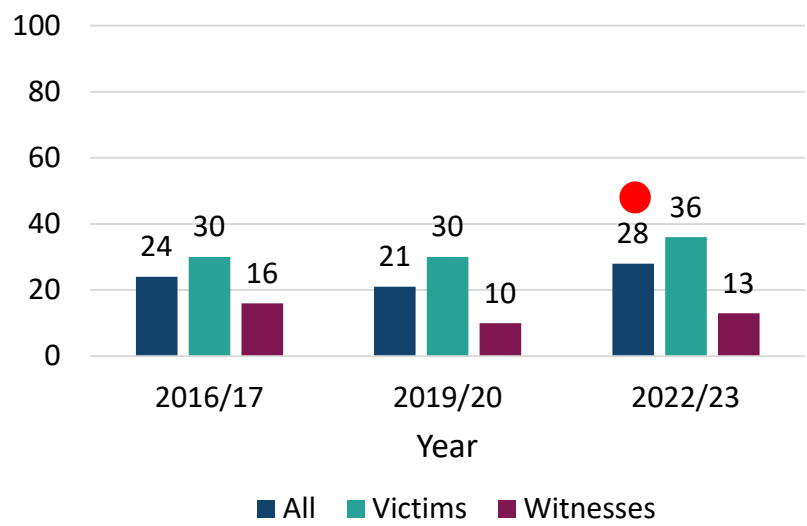
18. FEELINGS OF SAFETY

(iii) Intimidation during the criminal justice process

The 28% of respondents who reported that they or their families had felt intimidated at some stage of the process represented a significant increase on the 21% of respondents who reported this to have been the case in the earlier 2019/20 survey (Figure 18.3).

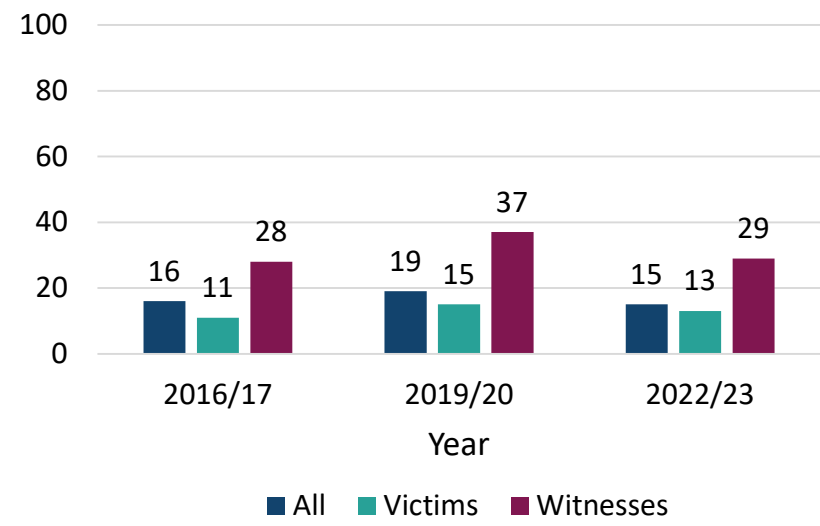
Of the 2022/23 respondents who had felt intimidated, 15% reported that the intimidation had occurred either in the court building or in the court room. The proportions reporting intimidation in the court building or the court room did not represent significant change compared with the equivalent figures for 2019/20 (Figure 18.4).

Figure 18.3: Proportion of respondents who reported that they or their families had felt intimidated at some stage during the process (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses

Figure 18.4: Proportion of respondents who reported that the intimidation had occurred in either the court building or in court room (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who reported that they or their family had felt intimidated at some point during the process

19. CASE OUTCOME AND SENTENCE

(i) Case Outcome

Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in either the proportion of respondents who found out the outcome of their case (Figure 19.1) or in the proportion who felt that the outcome had been fair (Figure 19.2).

Figure 19.1: Proportion of respondents who found out the outcome of their case (%)

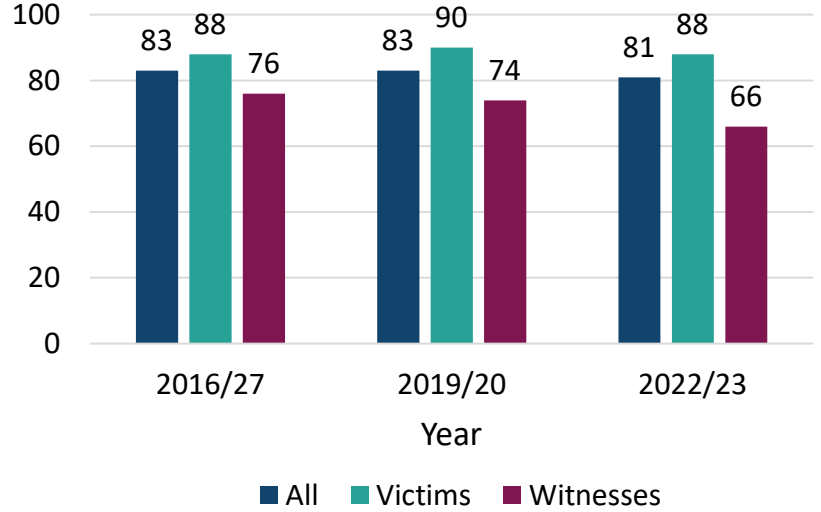
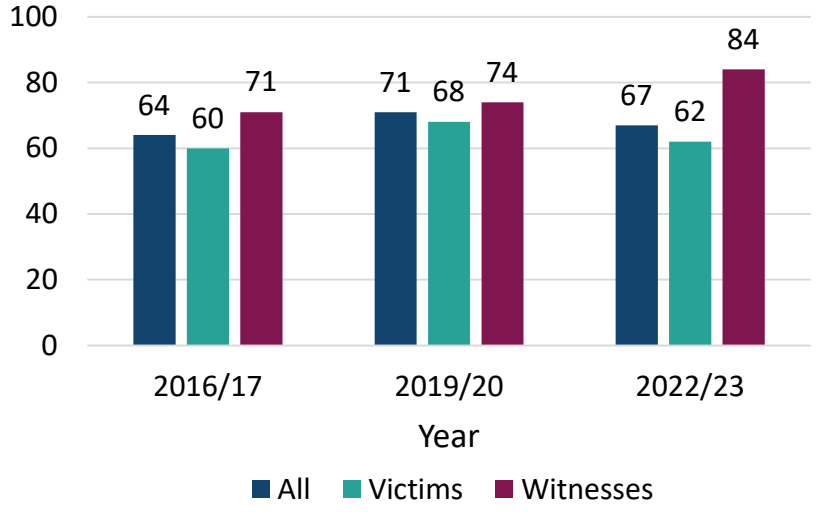


Figure 19.2: Proportion of respondents who felt that the case outcome had been fair (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses involved in cases which progressed to trial/hearing

1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who knew the case outcome

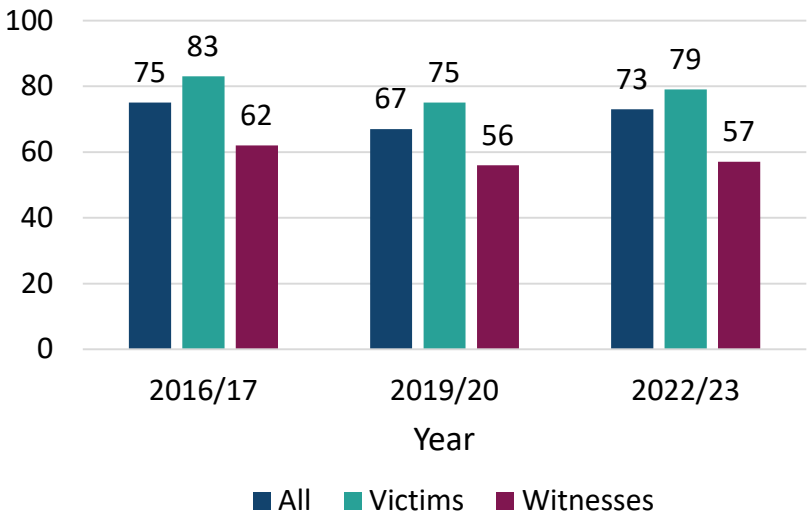
19. CASE OUTCOME AND SENTENCE

(ii) Sentencing

Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who reported knowing what sentence had resulted in their case (Figure 19.3).

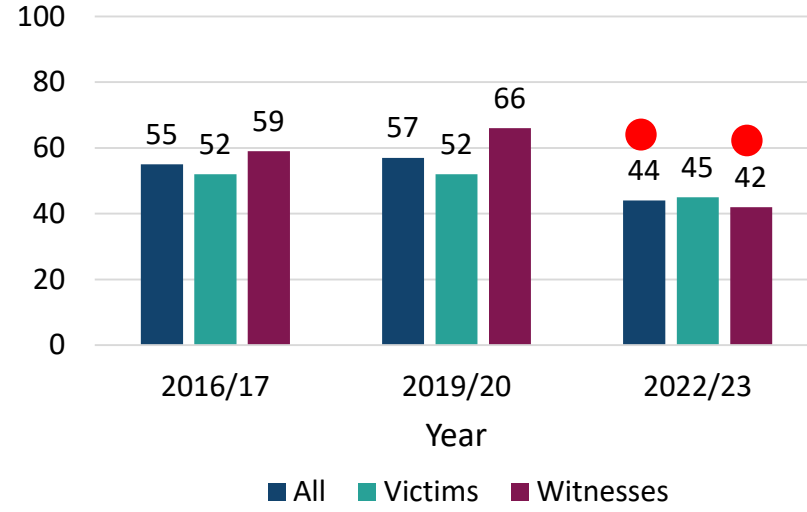
At both overall and at witness level, however, there were significant falls in 2022/23 in the proportions of respondents who felt that the sentence had been fair; overall the proportion fell from 57% to 44%; at witness level, the proportion fell from 66% to 42% (Figure 19.4).

Figure 19.3: Proportion of respondents who knew what the sentence was (%)

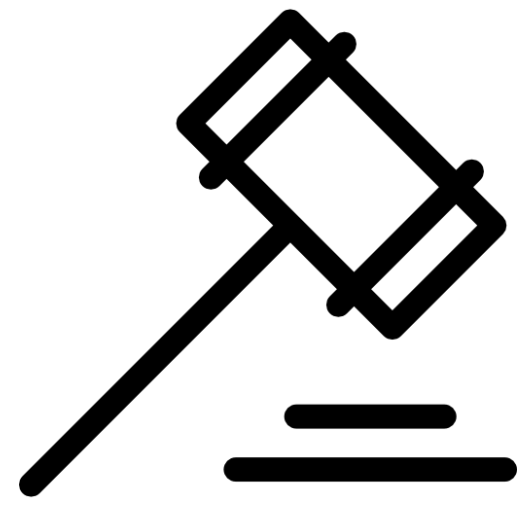


1. Asked of all victims and witnesses involved in cases where the offender was found or pleaded guilty

Figure 19.4: Proportion of respondents who felt that the sentence had been fair (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who knew what the sentence was



20. EXPENSES/COMPENSATION

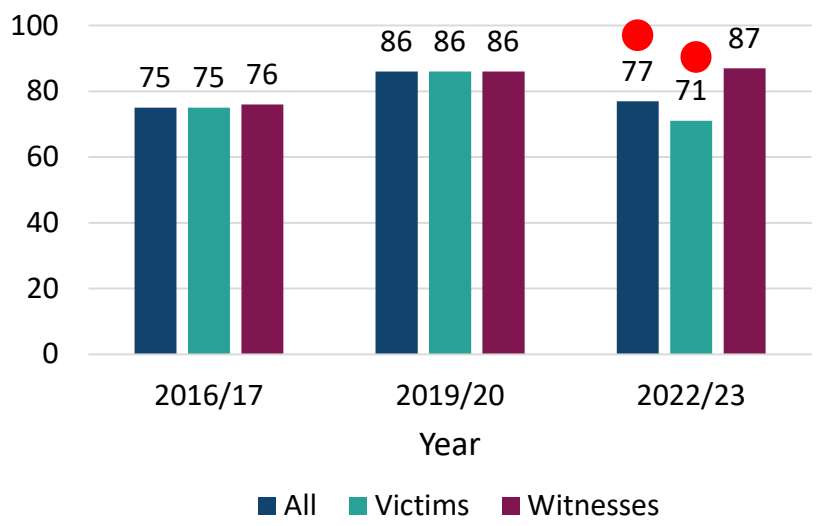
(i) Expense claim form

Compared with 2019/20, there were significant falls in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents overall and in the proportion of victims who reported having received a witness expense claim form (Figure 20.1) . Overall, the proportion fell from 86% to 77%; at victim level, the proportion fell from 86% to 71%.

(ii) Satisfaction with service from Compensation Agency

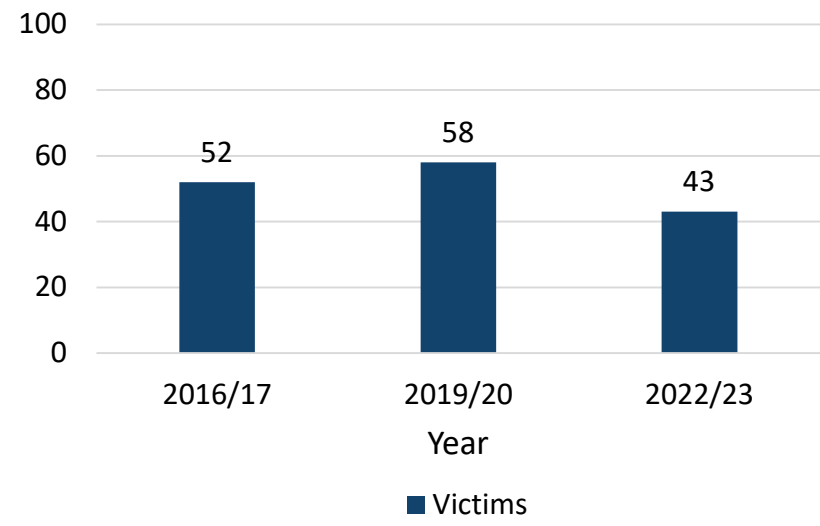
Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who reported being satisfied with the service received from the Compensation Agency (Figure 20.2).

Figure 20.1: Proportion of respondents who reported having received a witness expense claim form (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses asked to give evidence and who attended court

Figure 20.2: Proportion of victims satisfied with the service received from the Compensation Agency (%)



1. Asked of all victims who applied for compensation

NIVAWS: Voluntary Support Services and Victim Information Schemes

This section summarises the views of respondents on (i) their experience of Victim Support NI, (ii) the support received from the Adult Witness Service or the Young Witness Service and (iii) their experience of the victim information schemes (i.e. the Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland Information Scheme). The findings related to the victim information schemes should be treated with caution due to the small number of respondents to which these questions applied.

21. VOLUNTARY SUPPORT SERVICES

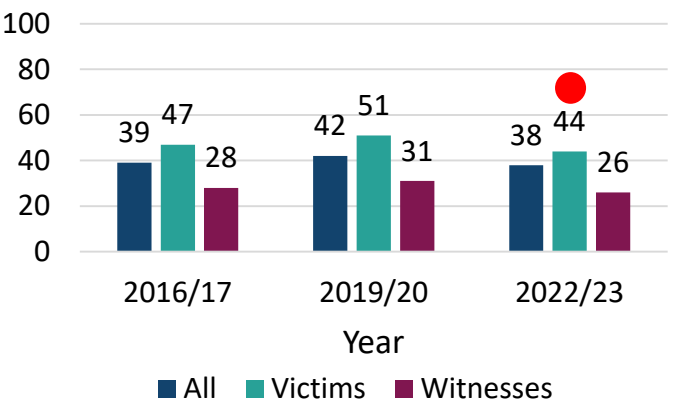
(i) Contact with Victim Support NI

Compared with 2019/20, there was a significant fall in 2022/23 in the proportion of victims who reported having had contact with Victim Support NI at some stage during the process (down from 51% in 2019/20 to 44% in 2022/23)(Figure 21.1).

(ii) Satisfaction with Victim Support NI contact

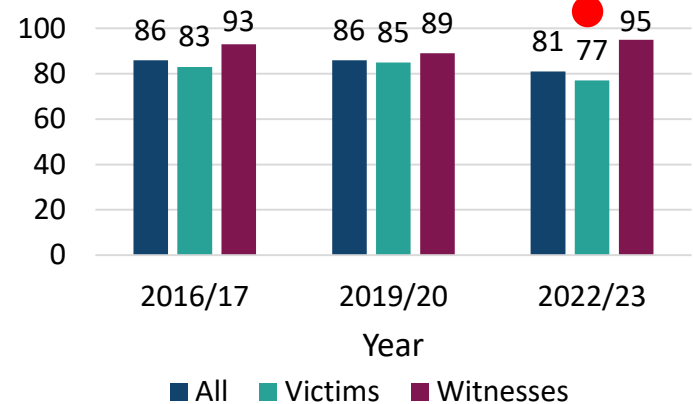
The 77% of victims satisfied with their contact with Victim Support NI in 2022/23 represented a significant reduction on the 85% satisfied in the 2019/20 survey (Figure 21.2).

Figure 21.1: Proportion of respondents who reported having had contact with Victim Support NI at some stage during the process (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses

Figure 21.2: Proportion of respondents who had been satisfied with the contact they had with Victim Support NI (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who had contact with Victim Support NI



21. VOLUNTARY SUPPORT SERVICES – WITNESS SERVICES

(iii) About the Witness Services

The aim of the witness services is to help prosecution witnesses, and/or their families and friends, to deal with the experience of going to court and giving evidence. There are two types of witness service available:

- one for adult witnesses, run by Victim Support NI (the Adult Witness Service), and
- one for witnesses under the age of 18 (the Young Witness Service), run by the NSPCC.

(iv) Contact with the Adult Witness Service and the Young Witness Service

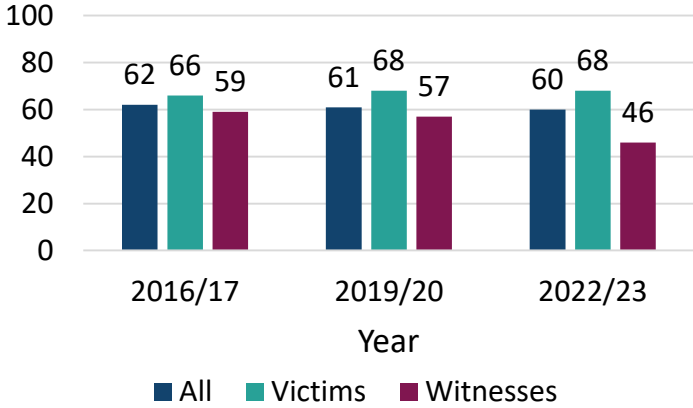
Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who reported having received support from either the Adult Witness Service or the Young Witness Service (Figure 21.3).

(v) Satisfaction with contact

Of those who had received support from these services, the vast majority reported being satisfied with the support provided.

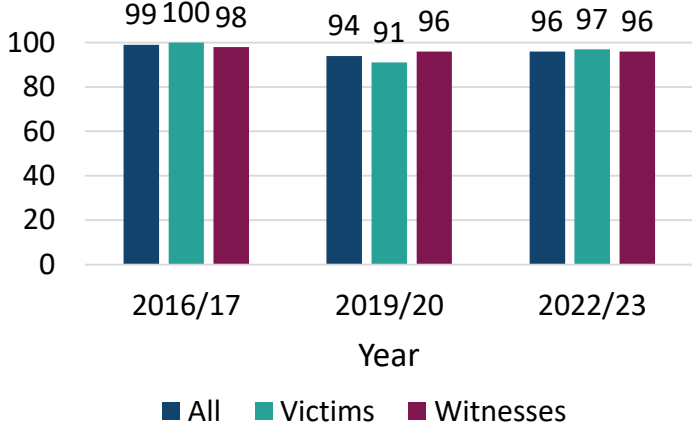
Compared with 2019/20, however, there was no significant change in the proportions of respondents satisfied (Figure 21.4).

Figure 21.3: Proportion of respondents who had received support from the Adult Witness Service or the Young Witness Service (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who attended court (including by video link)

Figure 21.4: Proportion of respondents who had been satisfied with the support provided by Adult Witness Service or the Young Witness Service (%)



1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who received support from the Adult Witness Service or the Young Witness Service

22. VICTIM INFORMATION SCHEMES

(i) Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme (PRVIS)

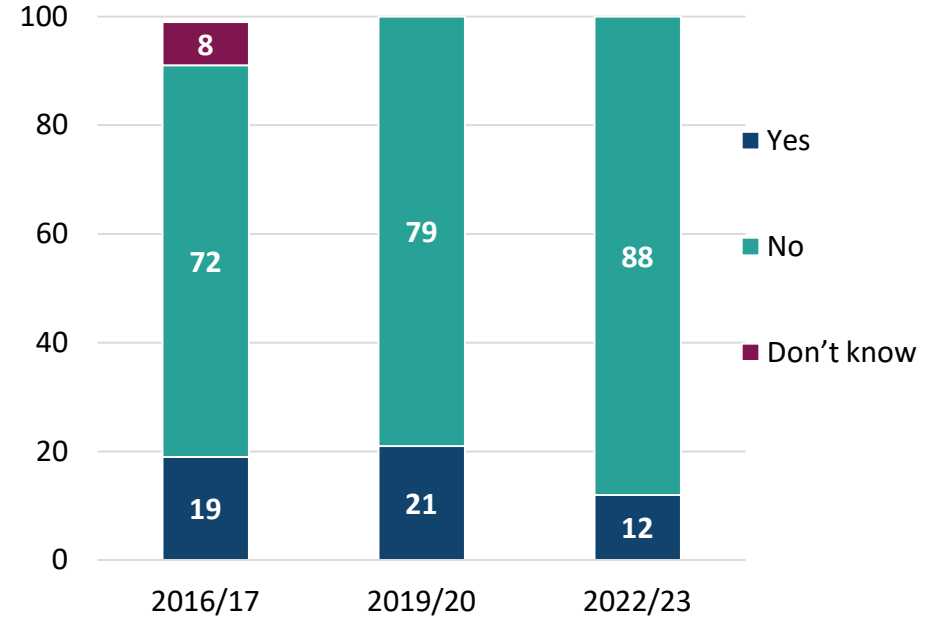
In 2022/23, of the 25 victims involved in cases where the offender received a custodial sentence of 6 months or longer, only 3 (12%) reported being aware of the PRVIS (Figure 22.1). None of the three had registered with the scheme.

Compared with 2019/20, there were no significant changes recorded in relation to victim awareness or uptake of PRVIS in 2022/23.

(ii) Probation Board for Northern Ireland Victim Information Scheme

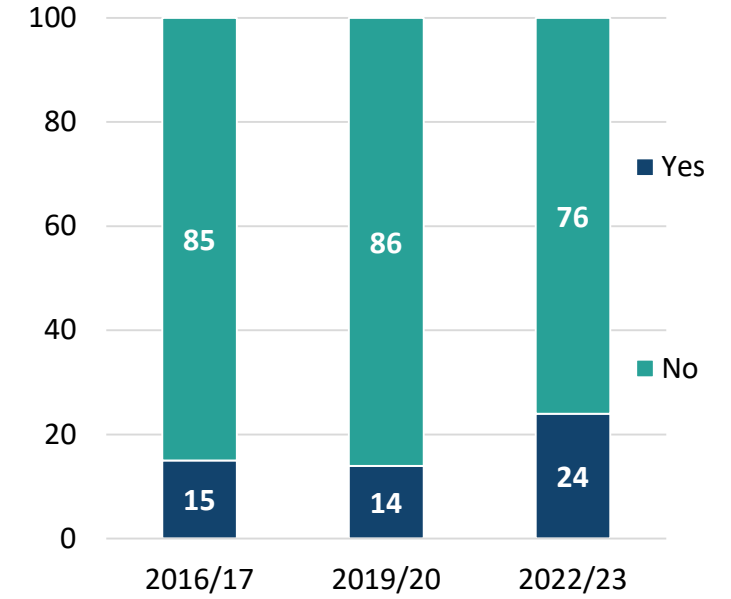
In 2022/23, of the 38 victims involved in cases where the offender received a sentence involving probation supervision, only 9 (24%) reported being aware of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland Victim Information Scheme (Figure 22.2). Of the 9 respondents aware of the scheme, 8 (89%) reported that they had not registered with the scheme; 1 respondent didn't know whether or not he/she had registered (Figure 22.3).

Figure 22.1: Whether victims had been aware of the Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme (PRVIS) (%)



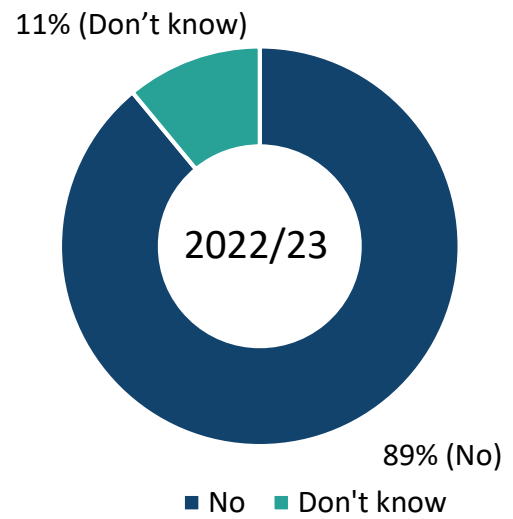
1. Asked of all victims where offender was found/pleaded guilty and received a sentence of 6 or more months

Figure 22.2: Whether victims had been aware of the PBNI Victim Information Scheme (%)



1. Asked of all victims involved in cases where the sentence involved probation supervision

Figure 22.3: Whether respondents had registered with the PBNI Victim Information Scheme, 2022/23 (%)



1. Asked of all victims who were aware of the PBNI Victim Information Scheme

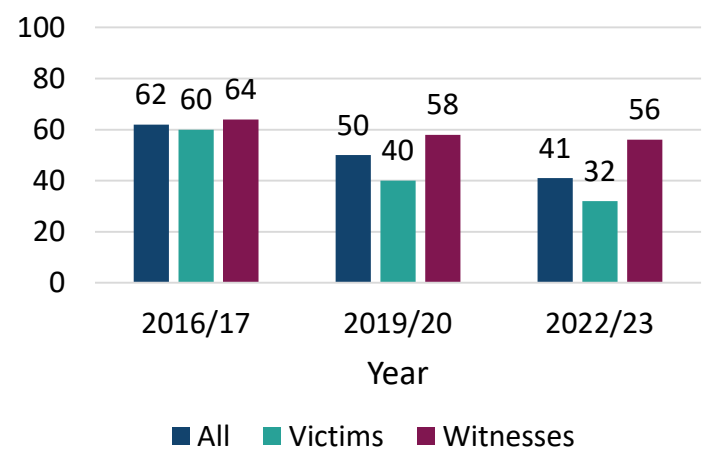
NIVAWS: Future Engagement with the Criminal Justice System

In this section, the findings related to the likeliness of victim and witness future engagement with the Criminal Justice System are outlined. These findings are addressed both from the perspective of victims and witnesses reporting any future similar incidents to the police and, also from a witness perspective, the likelihood of agreeing to be a witness in a criminal trial again.

23. LIKELIHOOD OF FUTURE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

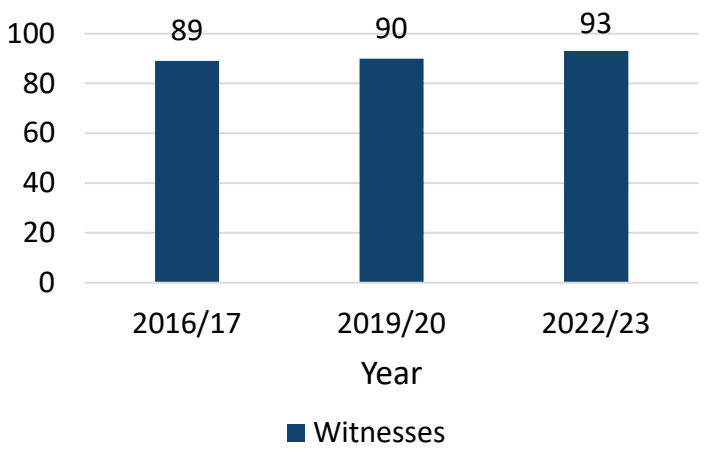
Of respondents who reported giving evidence in court, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion who stated that they would be likely to agree to be a witness in a criminal trial again (Figure 23.1). Similarly, there were no significant changes recorded in either the proportion of witnesses who said that they would report a similar crime again (Figure 23.2), or the proportion of victims who said that, were they to become a victim of a similar crime again, they would report the incident to the police (Figure 23.3).

Figure 23.1: Proportion of respondents likely to agree to be a witness in a criminal trial again (%)



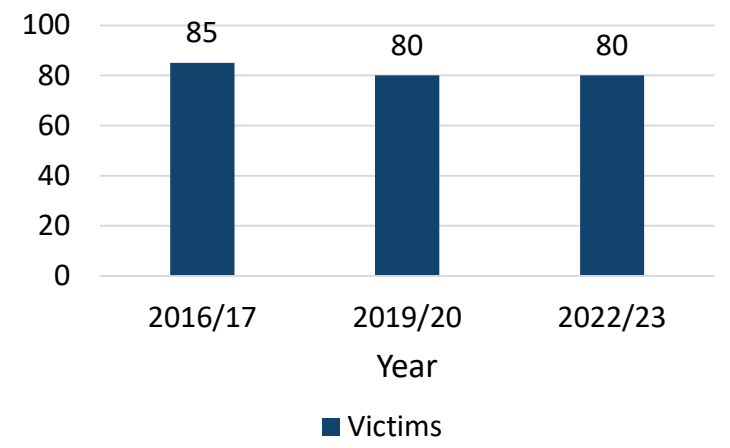
1. Asked of all victims and witnesses who ultimately gave evidence

Figure 23.2: Proportion of witnesses who, if they witnessed the same type of crime again, would report the incident to the police (%)



1. Asked of all witnesses

Figure 23.3: Proportion of victims who, if they were victims of a similar crime again, would report the incident to the police (%)



1. Asked of all victims

NIVAWS: Criminal Justice System - Global Satisfaction Indicators

This section summarises respondents' overall satisfaction levels in relation to (i) the information they had been given about the Criminal Justice System, (ii) how well they had been kept informed about the progress of their case, (iii) how well they had been treated by staff in the Criminal Justice System and (iv) their overall contact with the system.

It should be noted that, in keeping with historical approaches for analysis of these more global satisfaction questions, cases dealt with by means of a formal police caution/warning have been excluded. Additionally, the overall findings reported on in this section have been weighted to reflect the victim/witness balance in the original eligible population from which the sample was drawn.

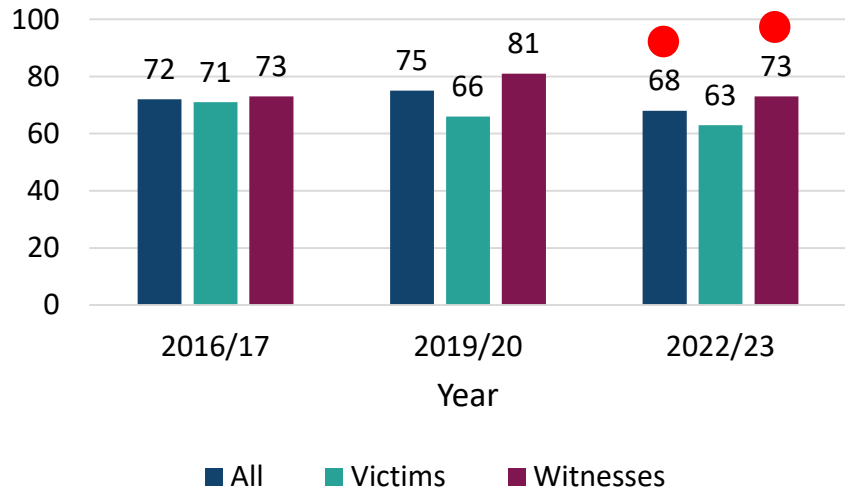
24. OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

(i) Respondent satisfaction with the information they had been given about the Criminal Justice System

Compared with 2019/20, there were significant reductions in 2022/23 in the proportions of respondents, both at overall and at witness level, who reported having been satisfied with the information they had been given about the Criminal Justice System (Figure 24.1). Overall, the proportion satisfied fell from 75% to 68%; at witness level, the proportion fell from 81% to 73%.



Figure 24.1: Proportion of respondents satisfied with the information they had been given about the Criminal Justice System (%)



- 1. Asked of all victims and witnesses
- 2. Analysis has excluded cases dealt with by formal police caution/warning

24. OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

(ii) Respondent satisfaction with how well they had been kept informed about the progress of their case

Compared with 2019/20, there was no significant change in 2022/23 in the proportion of respondents who were satisfied with how well they had been kept informed about the progress of their case (Figure 24.2).

(iii) Respondent satisfaction with how well they had been treated by staff in the Criminal Justice System

Compared with 2019/20, there were significant falls in 2022/23 at both overall and at witness level in the proportion of respondents satisfied with how well they had been treated by staff in the Criminal Justice System (Figure 24.3). Overall, the proportion satisfied fell from 86% to 79%; at witness level, the proportion fell from 92% to 85%.

Figure 24.2: Proportion of respondents satisfied with how well they had been kept informed about the progress of their case (%)

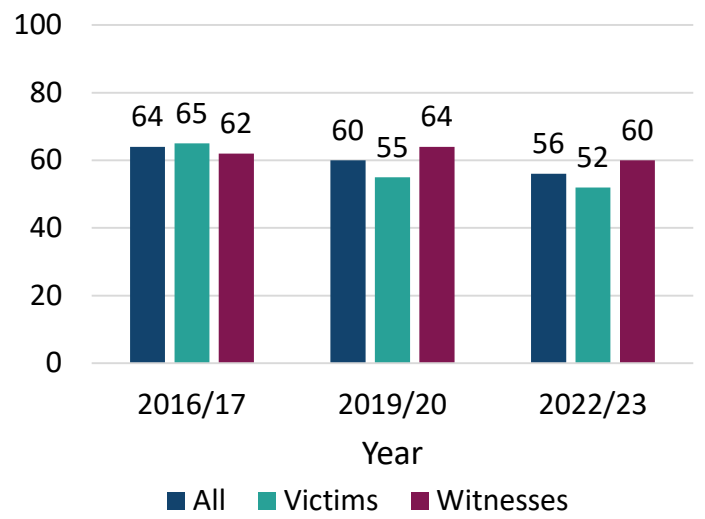
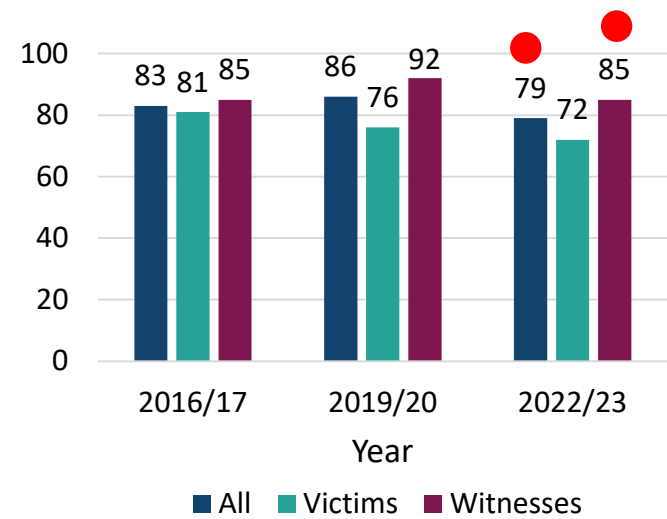


Figure 24.3: Proportion of respondents satisfied with how well they had been treated by staff in the Criminal Justice System (%)



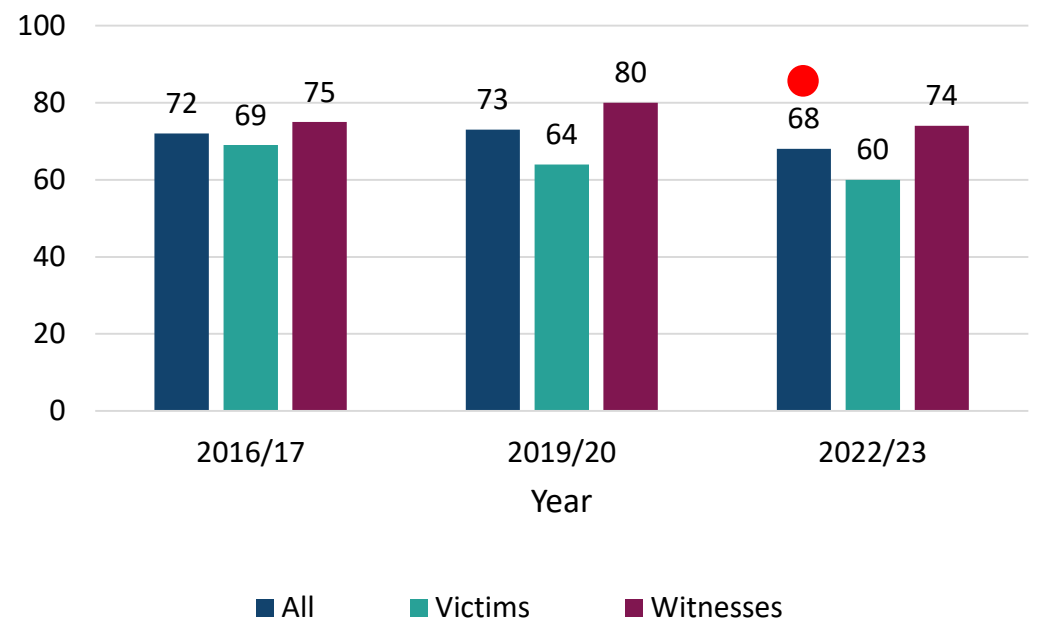
1. Asked of all victims and witnesses (applies to both charts on this page)
2. Analysis has excluded cases dealt with by formal police caution/warning (applies to both charts on this page)

24. OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

(iv) Respondent satisfaction with the contact they had with the criminal justice system

Compared with 2019/20, there was a significant fall in 2022/23 in the overall proportion of respondents who reported having been satisfied with the contact they had with the Criminal Justice System (down from 73% to 68%)(Figure 24.4).

Figure 24.4: Proportion of respondents satisfied with the contact they had with the Criminal Justice System (%)



- 1. Asked of all victims and witnesses
- 2. Analysis has excluded cases dealt with by formal police caution/warning