



VISUAL SUPPORT CARDS

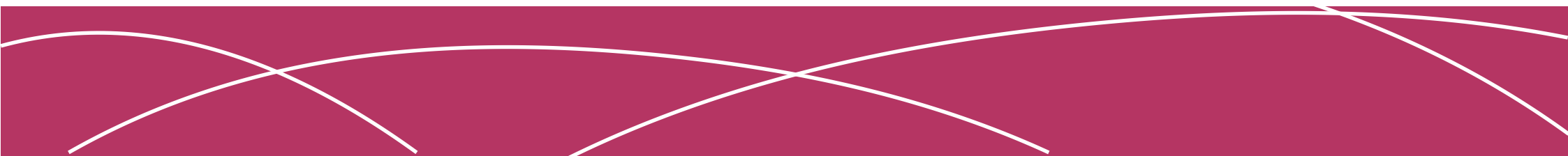
Representing clients with communication support needs in custody
A resource to accompany the SOLD Practice Guide for Defence Solicitors in Scotland

March 2023



**People First
(Scotland)**

**Thanks to Katrina Bradford, Speech
and Language Therapist for your
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About Communication Support Needs

We use the phrase 'communication support needs' to mean any person whose ability to understand and communicate is significantly impaired due to some form of cognitive or neurological impairment.

This can include people with learning disabilities, acquired brain injury, foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, dementia, autistic people, and people with other neurodevelopmental disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Mental health problems and complex trauma can also lead to significant communication difficulties.



About the cards

Aims:

- To help the accused person understand the custody process and what is going to happen.
- To support the accused person's ability to recall and articulate their version of what happened.
- To assist the solicitor to take instructions and help the client maintain concentration.
- To help the solicitor to gauge their clients' stress levels and get a clearer impression of their communication ability.
- To support the accused person to remember their legal rights.

When to use:

- If your client has a learning disability, is neurodiverse, has difficulties with communicating and understanding, or you think may be vulnerable.
- If you believe your client could benefit from visual support.

Why use the cards?

- Visuals can help provide structure and improve understanding.
- Visuals can hold attention longer than the spoken word, helping to orientate a person.
- They can help remind people of things they have been told, for example, of their rights.

How to use the cards

How to use:

This tool consists of visual support cards to augment verbal communication with a client. There are six sets of cards for various situations in the custody process. You may find these useful in other interactions outside custody.

- Download onto an electronic device or print off. You might want to laminate or use sheet protectors.
- Place the card somewhere they can easily be seen, like a table.
- Take it slowly and give your client lots of time.
- You may want to leave cards, such as the 'no comment' card, visible to a client during an interview, as a reminder to them of their rights.

There are six sets of cards presented in no particular order. You can use individual cards if you don't need the full set.

Introductions

Identifying support needs

Caution

Check how your client is coping

Explaining what has been said

Explaining what will happen next



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