

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



Thanks to Katrina Bradford, Speech and Language Therapist for your ideas and advice; the Law Society of Scotland; and to SOLD Members.

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 give 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.

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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Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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And the Centre for Ageing Better Image library

March 2023





Introductions





welcome





I am
your
solicitor






I will
help and
support
you



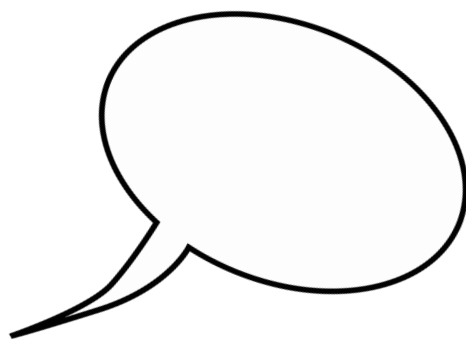


everything
we talk
about will
stay 
between us



you can
trust me





in the
interview
you can
talk to
me

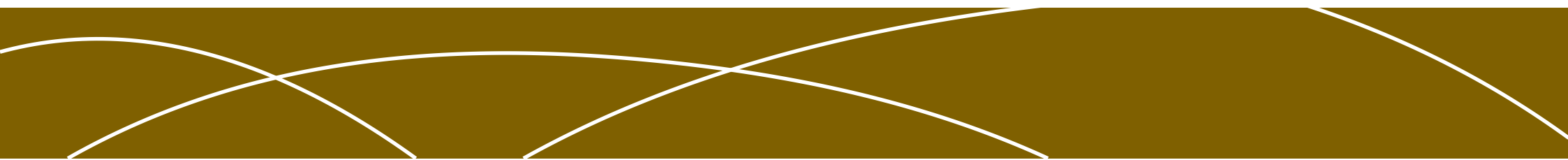




Identifying support needs

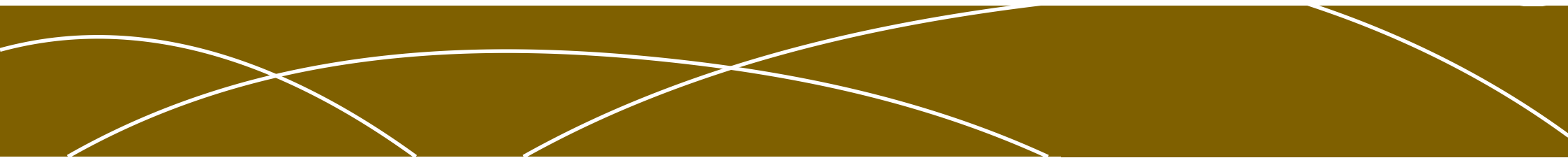


can you
read?





can you
write?



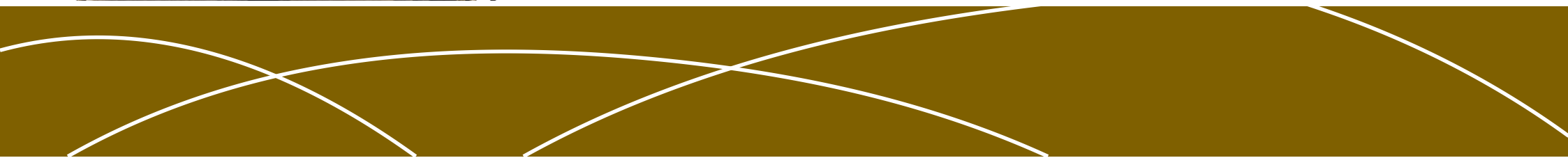


GP Surgery

when did
you last see
a doctor ?



do you have
health problems
or a disability?



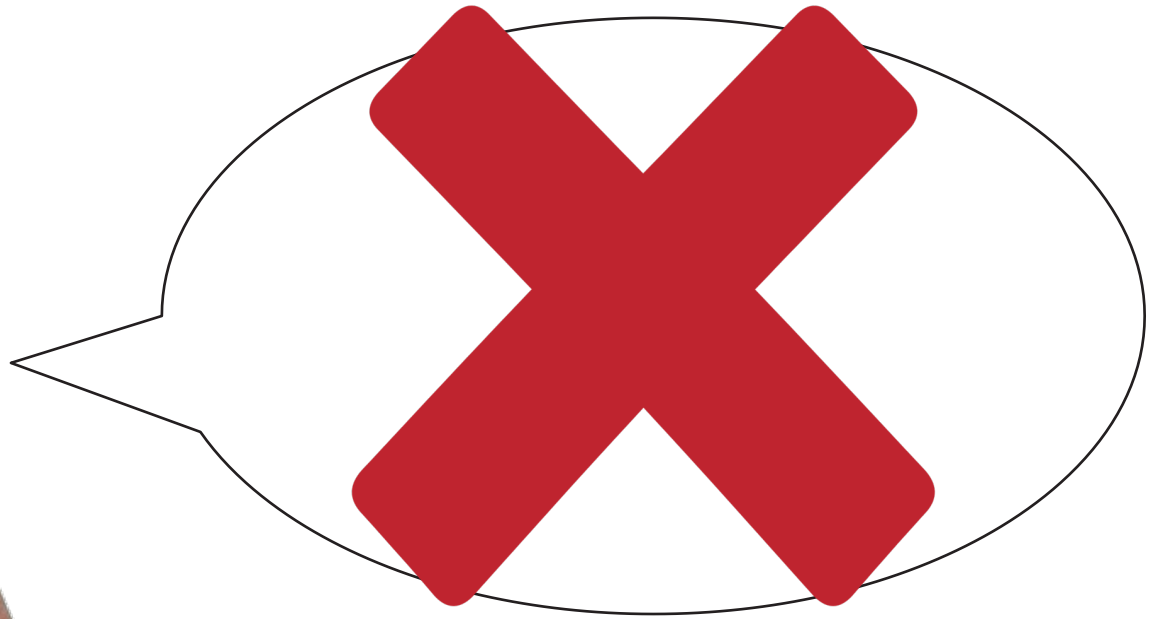


Caution

The image features a large, solid red circle in the upper-left quadrant. Inside the circle, the word "Caution" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The background is a light gray. In the lower-left and bottom portions of the image, there are several thin, white, curved lines that intersect and sweep across the frame, creating a sense of motion or a stylized landscape.



you do not
have to say
anything

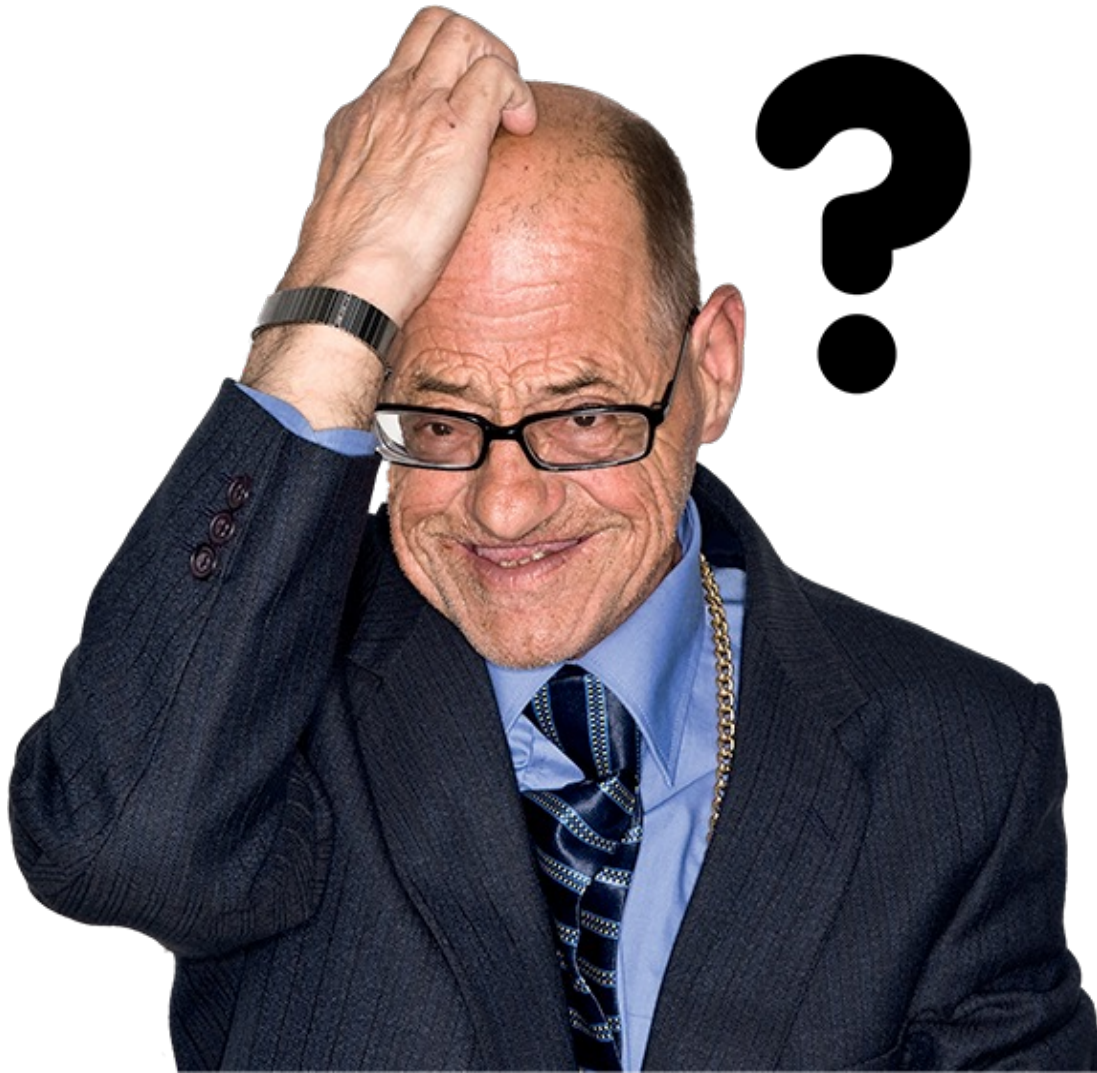


no comment

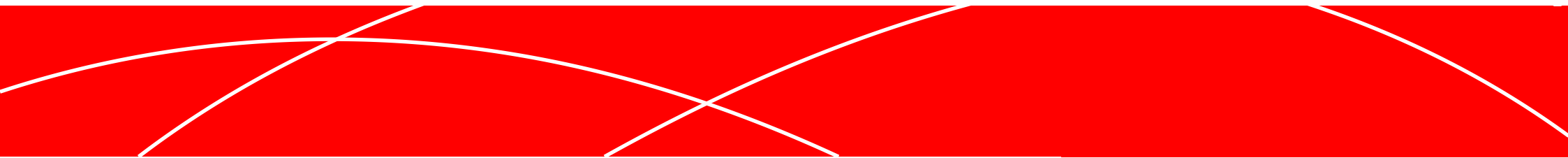




what you say
can be used
as evidence
in court



do you
understand?





**Check
how your
client is
coping**



how do
you feel?

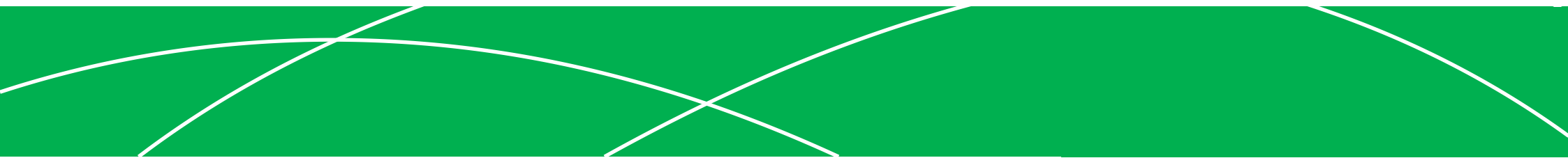




are they
speaking
too fast?



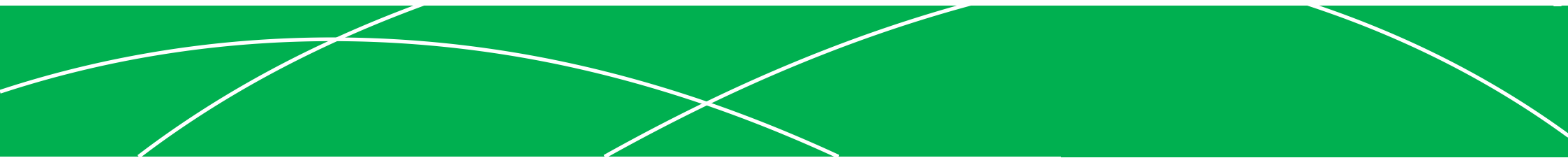
do you need
a break?

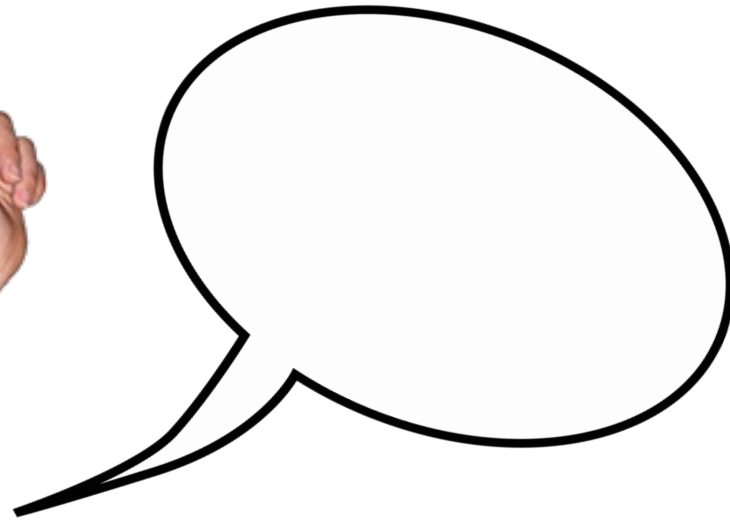




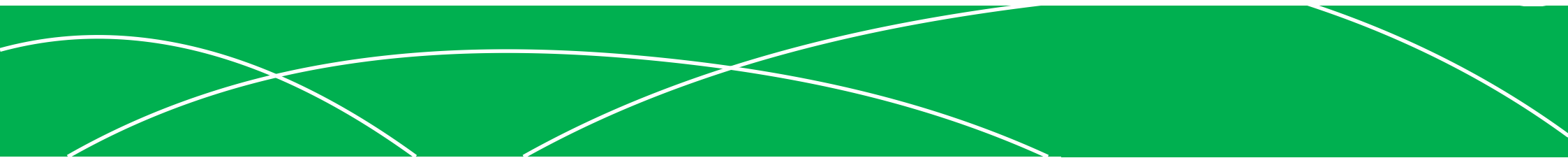
?

are you ok?



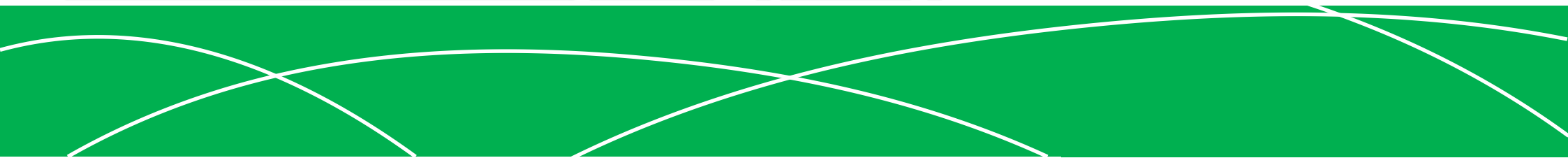



do you want
to speak?





do you
want to
speak in
private?





**Explaining
what has
been said**



this is
what the
police
said

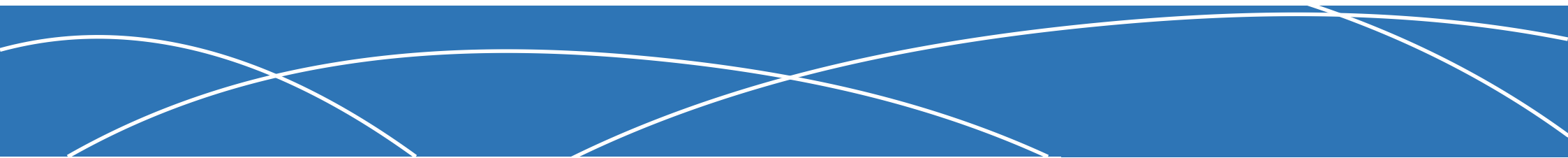


the police
have this
evidence



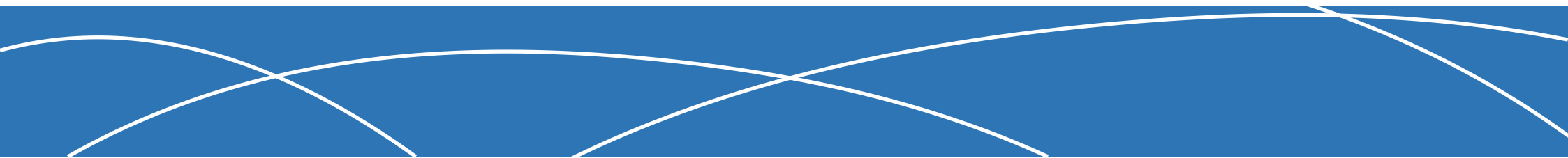


this is what
a witness
has said





this is
what you
said





**Explaining
what will
happen next**



the police
want to
talk to you



the police
will ask you
questions



the police
are looking
for answers





a solicitor
can be in
the police
interview
with you