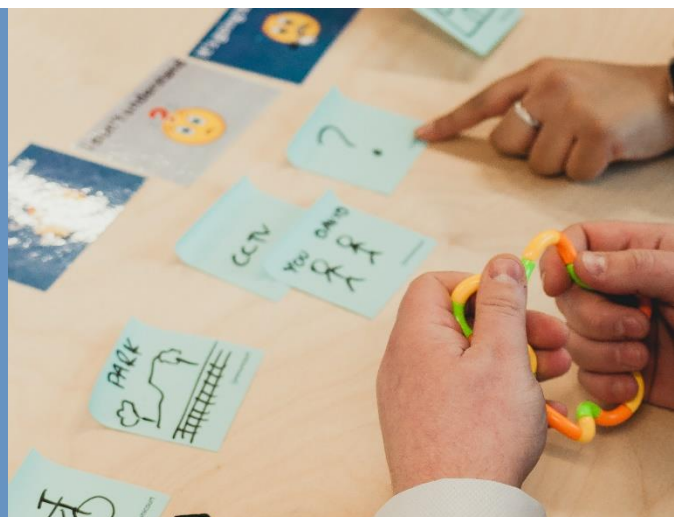


How can an intermediary assist at a Ground Rules Hearing?



WHAT IS A GROUND RULES HEARING?

A Ground Rules Hearing provides an opportunity for the judge, trial counsel and the intermediary to discuss the adaptations needed to assist a person with communication difficulties to fully participate during their court proceedings (read more about [Ground Rules Hearings here](#)).

A Ground Rules Hearing may take place on the day of a trial, Final Hearing or preliminary hearing (such as an Issues Resolution Hearing). Alternatively, a specific court date may be arranged to conduct a Ground Rules Hearing. In both circumstances, Communicourt recommends that an intermediary is booked to attend.

THE INTERMEDIARY ROLE AT A GROUND RULES HEARING

Prior to a Ground Rules Hearing, the intermediary will review all available information regarding your client's communication needs, including:

- The intermediary report.
- Any professional reports.
- Any intermediary case notes from previous hearings.

This will allow the intermediary to present recommendations to the court in detail, drawing on findings to provide clear rationales for their implementation.

If your client is in attendance at the Ground Rules Hearing, the intermediary will introduce themselves. They will explain in simple terms what a Ground Rules Hearing is and its purpose. This is to make sure your client knows what will be spoken about in court while the intermediary is addressing others.

At the hearing, the intermediary will address the court regarding recommendations to assist your client's understanding and participation throughout the court process. Although all recommendations are unique to the individual, the recommendations at this stage will likely concern:

- The frequency and length of breaks.
- The length of the court day.
- The role of the intermediary.
- The use of special measures.
- The provision of questions in advance.
- The provision of intermediary updates to the judge (regarding your client's needs and response to strategies).

The intermediary can also assist with any questions that the Judge or counsel may have regarding the report and provide further information regarding the assessment, their qualifications and their experience, if required.

GROUND RULES HEARINGS BEFORE YOUR CLIENT'S EVIDENCE

Communicourt intermediaries often recommend that a further Ground Rules Hearing takes place before your client gives their evidence. At this stage, further information and insight may have been gained regarding your client's communication profile and likely communication needs during their evidence.

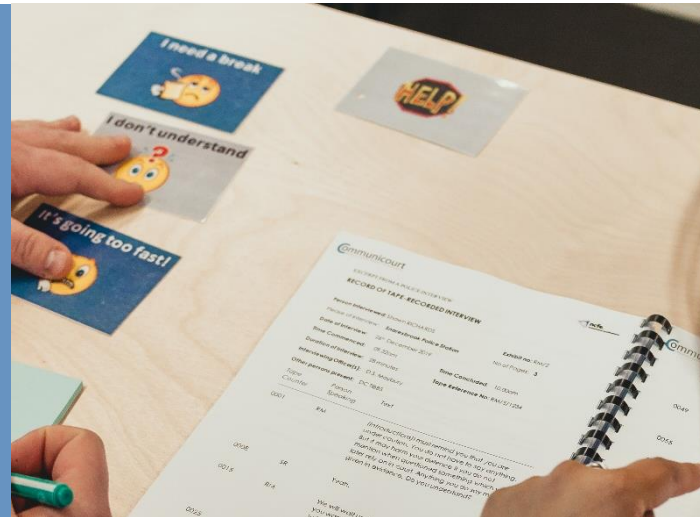
This is to discuss recommendations which are relevant to your client, and to reiterate any key recommendations within the report. Recommendations could include:

- The use of any special measures.
- The frequency of breaks.
- Question style.
- How the intermediary will intervene, if a question is likely to cause miscommunication.
- Additional strategies such as the use of a fidget object or visual aids (such as calendars or timelines).
- How to approach referring your client to written references (if they have literacy difficulties).

Learn more about the [role of an intermediary when a defendant or respondent is giving evidence here](#).

INFORMATION FOR LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

How we can help you



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

We work on behalf of HMCTS to provide Court Appointed Intermediaries in criminal and family courts. We are the largest Managed and approved Service Provider of communication support for defendants (and respondents in family cases). We passionately believe that everyone has a right to a fair trial.

HOW BOOKING AN ASSESSMENT WILL HELP YOU AND YOUR CLIENT

We will assess your client to understand their communication difficulties and how they might affect them in court. Your client does not need to have a diagnosis.

We produce a comprehensive report. This will identify any particular communication issues and make recommendations to help you and your client.

One of our highly trained intermediaries can be there throughout proceedings to facilitate those recommendations, meaning you can focus on your job.

Our experience means we can recommend solutions that make a tangible difference and support the justice system in getting a fair result.



HOW TO GET SUPPORT

BOOK ONLINE

Refer your client for an assessment through our online booking system [communicourt.co.uk](https://www.communicourt.co.uk)

5 minutes

FUNDING

We will send you a quote that you need to send to HMCTS and Legal Aid for them to approve funding

24 Hours

BOOK THE ASSESSMENT

Once you have funding in place, please let us know. We will then arrange an assessment

4-6 weeks

ASSESSMENT

The 3 hour assessment can be carried out in person or remotely. You will then receive a report

7 days

BOOK COURT DATES

We will send booking forms which must be signed by the court. Once received we will then book your intermediary

Throughout the trial