

Why request an intermediary assessment?



WHAT IS AN INTERMEDIARY ASSESSMENT?

An intermediary assessment is requested when concerns arise regarding an individual's ability to instruct their lawyers, understand and participate in court proceedings and communicate effectively during hearings (including [during any evidence](#) they may give).

The assessment comprises a number of tasks, designed to explore a wide range of communication areas, including your client's attention, auditory working memory capacity, receptive vocabulary, understanding of verbal information, literacy and ability to express themselves.

WHAT IS IN AN INTERMEDIARY REPORT?

Once a Communicourt intermediary assessment has been completed, a report will be produced within five working days. The report will typically include:

- A recommendation regarding intermediary allocation. *Please note, Communicourt does not recommend an intermediary in all cases. Your client's difficulties may be too severe for an intermediary to meaningfully improve their access to proceedings. Alternatively, they may have communication strengths which mitigate their communication needs, particularly with court adaptations (which will be detailed).*
- A summary of your client's communication profile.
- Recommendations to support their communication through all stages of proceedings.
- Detailed findings exploring each area of communication.
- Additional resources, such as a Court Communication Card.

DOES MY CLIENT NEED AN INTERMEDIARY ASSESSMENT?

It can be challenging to ascertain whether your client requires an intermediary assessment. In some cases, difficulties interacting with a client may not be related to an underlying communication need. In other situations, an individual with a communication need may be adept at masking their difficulties.

An intermediary assessment may be requested because an individual has a diagnosed learning disability, learning difficulty, neurodiverse condition or mental health condition. However, a formal diagnosis does not always mean an intermediary is required to assist. Equally, an individual without a formal diagnosis may present with considerable communication difficulties and require intermediary assistance.

Indications that your client may have a communication need include under-informative responses, unclear instructions, poor focus, frequent miscommunication, poor retention of information, low literacy and difficulties with emotional regulation. Learn more about identifying the [signs of possible communication need here](#).

ARRANGING AN INTERMEDIARY ASSESSMENT

Before an assessment can be booked, the court must approve funding for the assessment to take place. Once this funding has been confirmed, an assessment will be booked at the next available opportunity.

A Communicourt assessment can take up to three hours and must take place in a professional setting with a member of staff on-site. Suitable locations include a solicitor's office, Local Authority office, barrister's chambers, mother and baby unit, secure unit or prison.

Communicourt is the largest Managed and Approved Service Provider of intermediaries for defendants and respondents, in criminal and family courts. We passionately believe that everyone has a right to a fair trial.

Communicourt
communication matters in the courts

How we can help you



REQUESTING AN INTERMEDIARY ASSESSMENT

If you think your client may have a communication difficulty, intermediary support is fully funded. Communicourt assessments are simple to arrange using the process outlined below.

An intermediary assessment can provide professionals and the court with more insight into your client's communication strengths and difficulties, and how these may impact them during proceedings.

We produce comprehensive communication reports which identify issues and make detailed recommendations to help you and your client, even in cases where an intermediary is not recommended.

If an intermediary is recommended, one of our highly trained intermediaries can attend conferences (subject to funding) and hearings 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.

7 THINGS LEGAL PROFESSIONALS SHOULD CONSIDER

1. Not all communication difficulties are immediately obvious.
2. A medical diagnosis does not necessarily mean that a client requires an intermediary.
3. Clients *without* formal diagnoses may present with communication needs and require intermediary assistance
4. Intermediaries are professionally trained to identify communication needs and identify strategies that assist during court.
5. Funding must be approved by the court before an assessment can take place.
6. An assessment must be completed in order for an intermediary to assist in court.
7. Not all assessments result in intermediary assistance during proceedings.

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