

### **OpenLearn animation**

*Witness to harm - Witness experiences of cross-examination*

#### **Speaker 1, Speaker 2, Speaker 3, Speaker 4:**

SPEAKER 1: After raising a concern to a regulator about a healthcare or social worker, witnesses give evidence in a fitness to practise hearing. The research team conducted a series of interviews with these witnesses to further understand their experiences. These are direct quotes, although their identities have been changed.

SPEAKER 2: It was a tough time. I think I was still emotionally fragile from what happened and dealing with everything. And then again, like I said, having to speak about it in a public space. Obviously, my worst nightmare anyway, that I had to talk about something so personal and traumatic. It was a lot.

When I got to the hearing, I was a bundle of nerves. But when I was there, I was really put at ease with the caseworker and being led into the room beforehand. So I could understand where I'd be sitting, who would be speaking to me, who else would be in the room, if there was going to be a recording. And that really helped.

SPEAKER 3: It was intimidating, but you have to be strong, and then try to remember things because I didn't realise I had a memory loss caused by it. They went, how do you know you've got memory loss? So they were asking me questions, and I said, I can't remember. We spent ages on some areas.

I can remember things, what happened, but certain things I can't remember because my memory is gone. And I thought I was abused. They should be more wary. They weren't aware of it, so it needed more hard work for me. And the way they were talking as well, these solicitors, I put it to you, hang on a minute. I'm not in court here.

And then so much paperwork as well. So they're all confused as well. You've got a page, you've got bundles in here, and then you go to page 699. You've got to try and find it. And then it's that one there, and then you have to go to that page. So it's a bit confusing.

SPEAKER 4: I think they gave me-- they sort of explained how it worked. But what I think would have been most useful if someone had attempted to prepare me for what the cross examination might be like. So yeah, we then had another two weeks in [BLEEP] that we had to out for ourselves.

But I've got a cousin who lives on the edge of [BLEEP]. So we stayed in his spare room. And my parents basically moved in and looked after my three children for those two weeks. But it was a nightmare logistically, and the girls weren't happy that we were vanishing.

So it's-- I think it's hard not having a representative because you can't talk back and argue back for yourself. So it felt like the barrister could say whatever he wanted and try and like tear me apart and make out like I was a bad mum, and that I didn't care about my children and that I was too busy to go and do what the midwife said, and that I wasn't listening, but I wasn't allowed to say no or to give any evidence about myself that proves that I do always take health care professionals' advice. Because it wasn't about me. It was about the midwife's fitness to practise.