Being a Witness in Trinidad and Tobago: A Qualitative Case Study on the nature of Witness Care in the Criminal Justice System in Trinidad and Tobago

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A review of literature shows that there are no formalized Witness Care programmes in Trinidad and Tobago. In spite of the important role witnesses play in the criminal justice system, no specific care legislation or programme governing their treatment or management exists in Trinidad and Tobago. This study seeks to explore the nature of Witness Care in Trinidad and Tobago from the perspective of key stakeholders such as Judges, Lawyers, criminal justice administrators (Director of Public Prosecutions, Minister of National Security, Chief Justice) and most importantly, the witnesses themselves. The study employs a qualitative case study research methodology to collect data using in-depth and unstructured interviews. Preliminary findings demonstrate that there are three major categories of witness experience: psychological/emotional, physical and financial. This paper differentiates terms often confused, ‘witness care’ and ‘witness protection’. Implications and recommendations are discussed.

**Keywords:** Witness protection; witness care; witnesses; criminal justice system; Trinidad and Tobago