



Home Office

# Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

This guidance is based on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### About this guidance

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This guidance tells Home Office staff and officers working in criminal investigation teams in immigration enforcement about tasked witnesses and how to deal with them, about witnesses who assist and the modified process you are sometimes allowed to use.

It gives information on the following:

- definitions of tasked witness and a witness who assists
- about the tasked witness process
- procedures for dealing with tasked witnesses, and
- the modified process for witnesses who assist.

Changes to this guidance – This page tells you what has changed since the previous version of this guidance.

Contacts – This page tells you who to contact for help if your senior caseworker or line manager can't answer your question.

Information owner – This page tells you about this version of the guidance and who owns it.

Safeguard and promote child welfare - This page explains your duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and tells you where to find out more information.

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### Changes to this guidance

<p><a href="#">About this guidance</a>  <a href="#">Definition of a tasked witness</a>  <a href="#">Criteria for using a tasked witness</a>  <a href="#">Use and conduct authority – the process you must follow</a>  <a href="#">Meetings with tasked witnesses</a>  <a href="#">Considering security and other issues</a>  <a href="#">The 'witnesses who assist' process</a></p>	<p>This page lists changes to the using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist guidance, with the most recent at the top.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date of the change</th> <th>Details of the change</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>29 October 2013</td> <td> <p>Six month review by the modernised guidance team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to use the tasked witness process:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ restricted text changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• First contact, authority levels and closure:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ restricted text changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tasked witness process - roles and responsibilities:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ restricted text changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Considering security and other issues:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ restricted text changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Minor housekeeping changes.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>29 April 2013</td> <td> <p>Six month review by the modernised guidance team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to use the tasked witness process:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sub-heading 'Dealing with confidential information' national source unit telephone number changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• First contact, authority levels and closure:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sub-heading 'First point of contact' national source unit telephone number changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Minor housekeeping changes.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Date of the change	Details of the change	29 October 2013	<p>Six month review by the modernised guidance team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to use the tasked witness process:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ restricted text changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• First contact, authority levels and closure:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ restricted text changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tasked witness process - roles and responsibilities:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ restricted text changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Considering security and other issues:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ restricted text changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Minor housekeeping changes.</li> </ul>	29 April 2013	<p>Six month review by the modernised guidance team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to use the tasked witness process:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sub-heading 'Dealing with confidential information' national source unit telephone number changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• First contact, authority levels and closure:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sub-heading 'First point of contact' national source unit telephone number changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Minor housekeeping changes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Related links</b></p> <p><a href="#">How to use the tasked witness process</a></p> <p><a href="#">First contact, authority levels and closure</a></p> <p><a href="#">Tasked witness process - roles and responsibilities</a></p> <p><a href="#">Considering security and other issues</a></p> <p><b>See also</b></p> <p><a href="#">Contact</a></p> <p><a href="#">Information owner</a></p> <p>Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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		For previous changes to this guidance you will find all earlier versions in the archive. See related link: <a href="#">Using tasked witnesses - archive.</a>		

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### Definition of a tasked witness

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This section tells you the definition of a tasked witness.

A tasked witness is a person who:

- is likely or expected to give evidence in any forthcoming court case as a witness
- is required to fulfil the role of a covert human intelligence source (CHIS) in connection with the enquiry, and
- will give evidence of their activity as a CHIS.

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For more information and the full definition of a CHIS, see links:

- RIPA 2000, and
- Covert human intelligence sources code of practice.

#### Related links

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#### External links

[RIPA 2000](#)

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### Criteria for using a tasked witness

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This page tells you the conditions the investigation must meet before you can apply to use a tasked witness.

You must be satisfied all the criteria have been met before you can consider using a tasked witness.

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### Related links

[First contact, authority levels and closure](#)

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### Use and conduct authority – the process you must follow

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This section tells you about the benefits of using the tasked witness process, who to contact and the roles and responsibilities of the process.

The use and conduct of a tasked witness process provides:

- a transparent, documented process:
  - that gives a witness 'use and conduct' authority, and
  - without the need to disclose sensitive documentation or methods used.

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By following the tasked witness process you can meet:

- all of the guidelines, and
- the requirements for using a tasked witness.

#### In this section

[How to use the tasked witness process](#)

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[Tasked witness process - roles and responsibilities](#)

#### External links

[RIPA 2000](#)

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	<p>For more information see related links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RIPA 2000, and</li><li>• RIPA code of practice for the use of human intelligence sources.</li></ul> <p><b>Dedicated source units (DSU)</b> You may come across the term 'dedicated source unit' when using a tasked witness. Dedicated source units are used for handling CHIS rather than tasked witnesses.</p>	
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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### How to use the tasked witness process

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This page tells you about the tasked witness process and risks you need to think about when you are considering applying to use this process.

#### Applications

If you are dealing with a covert human intelligence source (CHIS) and you want to apply to use a tasked witness, you must be aware of and comply with:

- all relevant Home Office policy and associated procedures, including:
  - Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), and
  - the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidelines.

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For more information, see related links:

- RIPA 2000
- Covert human intelligence sources code of practice
- Application/renewal for the use and conduct of a tasked witness.

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### First contact, authority levels and closure

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This page tells you who to contact before you apply to use a tasked witness, what level of authority you must have to use one and closing the authority.

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### Tasked witness process - roles and responsibilities

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This page tells you about the roles and responsibilities you will have, depending on your part in an investigation, which involves using a covert human intelligence source (CHIS) or tasked witness.

Due to the complexities involved in many covert operations, the investigation must be overseen by an officer of at least:

- Her Majesty's inspector (HMI)
- senior investigations officer (SIO), or
- detective inspector rank.

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### Meetings with tasked witnesses

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This page tells you how to handle a meeting with a tasked witness and what records you must keep of the meeting.

**External links**  
[R v Bryce](#)

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### Considering security and other issues

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This page tells you about the security matters and issues you need to be aware of when dealing with a tasked witness, and what to do if they arise.

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### The 'witnesses who assist' process

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This section tells you what the process is if you want to use a 'witness who assists' and which witnesses are eligible to be considered as a 'witness who assists'.

The process for 'witnesses who assist' is one you can use when you have a witness who:

- is willing to 'assist' your investigation, but
- who will not be tasked with any covert activity.

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**External links**  
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For general information on humint (human intelligence) and covert human intelligence sources (CHIS), see related links:

- RIPA 2000, and
- Covert human intelligence sources code of practice.

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### 'Witnesses who assist' process - roles

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This page tells you about the roles and responsibilities of using the 'witnesses who assist' process.

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### Documents used in the 'witnesses who assist' process

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This page tells you about the documents you must complete when using the 'witnesses who assist' process.

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### Closing a case in the 'witnesses who assist' process

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This page tells you about the steps you must take when you stop using the 'witnesses who assist' process.

Once the operation has finished there are various actions you need to take, depending on your role:

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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

### Contact

<p><a href="#">About this guidance</a> <a href="#">Definition of a tasked witness</a> <a href="#">Criteria for using a tasked witness</a> <a href="#">Use and conduct authority – the process you must follow</a> <a href="#">Meetings with tasked witnesses</a> <a href="#">Considering security and other issues</a> <a href="#">The 'witnesses who assist' process</a></p>	<p>This page tells you who to contact if you need more help with a question about using tasked witnesses and the modified process for witnesses who assist.</p> <p>If you have read this guidance and still need more help, you must first ask your line manager.</p> <p>If you need further help you may contact:</p> <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"><p>Restricted – do not disclose – start of section</p><p>The information in this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.</p><p>Restricted – do not disclose – end of section</p></div> <p>Changes to this guidance can only be made by the modernised guidance team (MGT). If you think the policy content needs amending you must contact the criminal investigation operational guidance team, using the related link, who will ask the MGT to update the guidance, if appropriate.</p> <p>The MGT will accept direct feedback on broken links, missing information or the format, style and navigability of this guidance. You can send these using the link: Email: Modernised guidance team.</p>	<p><b>In this section</b> <a href="#">Changes to this guidance</a></p> <p><a href="#">Information owner</a></p> <p><b>External links</b> Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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## Using tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist

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This page tells you about this version of the guidance on the use of tasked witnesses and witnesses who assist and who owns it.

Version	3.0
Valid from date	29 October 2013
Guidance owner	Official – sensitive: information removed
Cleared by director	Official – sensitive: information removed
Director's role	Official – sensitive: information removed
Clearance date	11 October 2012
This version approved for publication by	Official – sensitive: information removed
Approver's role	Official – sensitive: information removed
Approval date	8 October 2013

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