

18 September 2026

Tracing a former witness

Summary and scope

A plausible lead is not a confirmed identity or a completed trace.

A fictional example

Every person, organisation, event, and exhibit in this sample is invented. It demonstrates report structure and reasoning; it is not a client case, evidence, legal advice, or a promise of an outcome.

The question

A solicitor seeks to re-establish contact with a former project employee who may have witnessed a disputed handover. Can the limited records identify a reliable route for inviting that person to contact the solicitor?

Summary of findings

An archived project record supplied by the solicitor identifies a name and role (E01). A current public professional biography uses the same name and describes compatible work history (E02). A second same-name entry has materially different employment dates (E03). No subject contact or independent identity confirmation occurred.

Assessment

The professional biography is a **plausible lead**, with **low analytical confidence** in the identity match. Compatible details justify considering a discreet verification step; they do not establish that the person is the former employee. The trace remains incomplete.

Agreed scope

Compare the supplied project record with relevant public professional information. No private-address searches, restricted records, covert contact, or disclosure of the dispute to an employer were authorised. Any contact proposal returns to the solicitor for approval.

Findings and reasoning

Test the match, record conflicting information, and preserve uncertainty.

Finding 1 · The starting record is limited

Document review. The project record names an employee and describes their role at the relevant time. Reference: E01.

Limit. It contains no reliable current contact details or unique identifier. It does not establish what the employee actually witnessed or would now recall.

Finding 2 · One biography is compatible

Observation and comparison. The public biography uses the same name and lists a compatible former role and period. Reference: E02.

Limit. The biography may be incomplete, inaccurate, or out of date. Shared names and compatible career details do not independently prove identity.

Finding 3 · A competing match is weaker

Observation and comparison. A second same-name entry gives employment dates inconsistent with the project record. Reference: E03.

Limit. The discrepancy weakens that match but does not conclusively exclude it; either source could contain an error.

Decision for the instructing solicitor

The report identifies a lead requiring verification, not a person located with certainty. The solicitor should assess whether a minimal, neutral invitation through an approved professional contact route is appropriate. No party details or allegations need be disclosed to test willingness to make contact. No invitation has been sent in this example.

Evidence schedule and limitations

Keep identity, contact, and evidential value as separate questions.

E01 · Archived project record

Copy supplied by the fictional solicitor, showing the historical name and role.

E02 · Compatible professional biography

Invented public-source record with a matching name and compatible employment history.

E03 · Alternative same-name entry

Invented public-source record containing a conflicting employment timeline.

What is not established

The subject's identity, current location, willingness to assist, recollection, and evidential value remain unconfirmed. A professional biography does not verify a residential address. No successful service, witness cooperation, or legal privilege is implied.

How a live case differs

A live report would retain source references, capture times, matching criteria, discrepancies, and records of any separately approved contact. Identifying details would be handled through the agreed channel. No underlying records, contact details, signatures, or identity documents exist for this sample.

Using and correcting a report

The solicitor decides the next proportionate step and the relevance of any eventual witness account. A later identity check could confirm or reject the lead. Any change should be recorded in a dated supplement, distinguishing new information from the original assessment and notifying recipients.