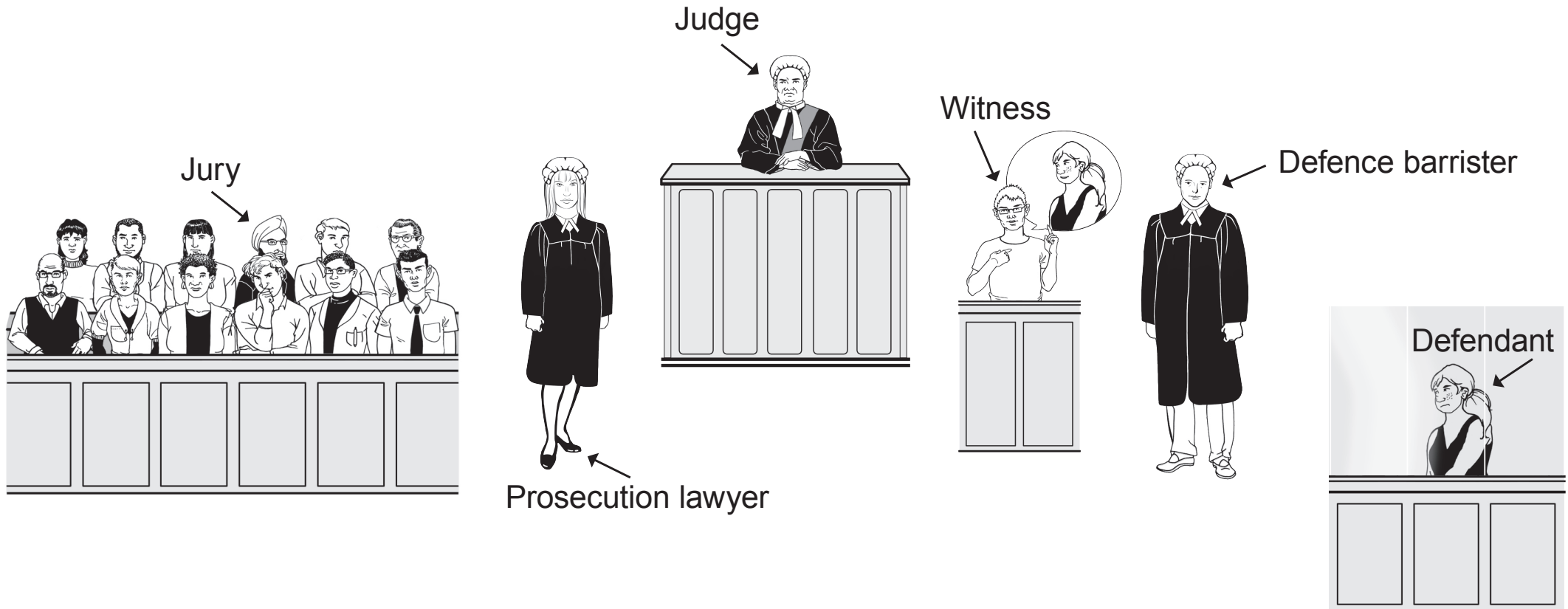




Easy Read guide for a Defendant going to a Crown Court

Someone who is accused of doing a crime and has to go to a Court is called a defendant. If you have to go to a Crown Court as a defendant, this Easy Read guide may help you understand what to expect.



What is a Crown Court?

If someone tells the police that you have done a crime you may have to go to a Court.

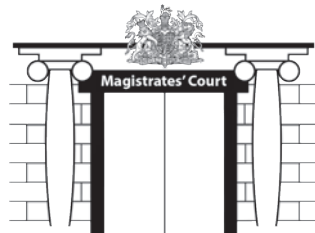


Someone who is accused of doing a crime and goes to a Court is called a **defendant**.

Defendant



If a defendant is accused of a less serious crime, a **Magistrates' Court** will decide what happens to them.

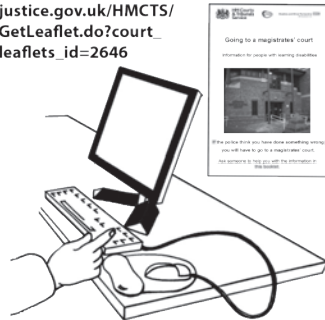


An example of a less serious crime is doing graffiti.



You can find out more about magistrates' courts in an easy read guide called *Going to a Magistrates' Court*. It is on the internet at: http://hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/HMCTS/GetLeaflet.do?court_leaflets_id=2646

http://hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/HMCTS/GetLeaflet.do?court_leaflets_id=2646



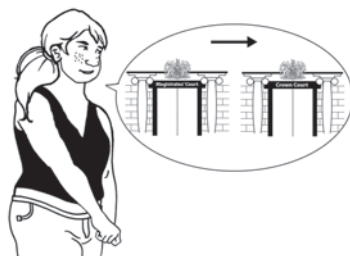
If a defendant is accused of a more serious crime, a **Crown Court** will decide what happens to them.



An example of a more serious crime is attacking someone.



A defendant accused of a less serious crime can choose to go to the Crown Court.



Before you go to the Court – getting a solicitor

A **defence solicitor** is someone who helps a defendant with the law.



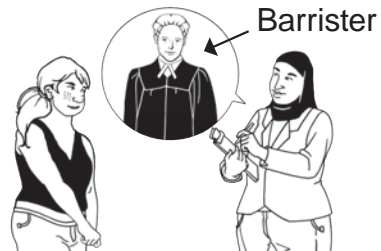
If you don't have much money, you may be able to get free help from a solicitor.

This is called **legal aid**.



Your defence solicitor can get you a **barrister**.

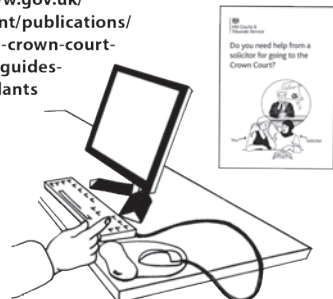
A barrister is someone who will tell the Court your side of the story.



You can find out more about getting a defence solicitor in an easy read guide called *Do you need a solicitor?*

It is on the internet at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/going-to-a-crown-court-easy-read-guides-for-defendants>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/going-to-a-crown-court-easy-read-guides-for-defendants>



Before you go to Court – getting an interpreter

An **interpreter** is someone who can explain things in a language you understand.



If you would like an interpreter when you go to Court, please tell your solicitor straight away.



Before you go to the Court – getting support

You can ask a carer, friend or relative to go to the Court to give you support.



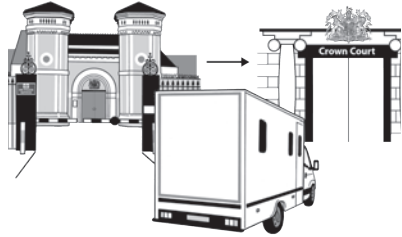
Court staff cannot look after children for you.

If you need to bring your children to the Court you must bring an adult to look after them.



Going to the Court – if you are in prison

If you are in prison, the prison staff will make arrangements to get you to the Court.



Going to the Court – if you are not in prison

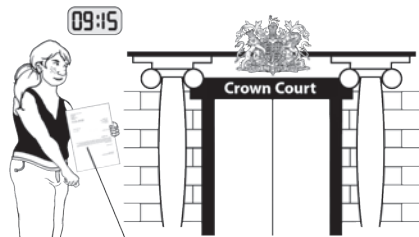
You can find out about ways to get to the Court on the internet at:

<https://courtribunalfinder.service.gov.uk/search/>

<https://courtribunalfinder.service.gov.uk/search/>



It is important that you get to the Court on time. Please allow extra time for going through security when you get to the Court.



Please arrive by 9:30am

If you think you will be late, you should let the Court and your solicitor (if you have one) know straight away.

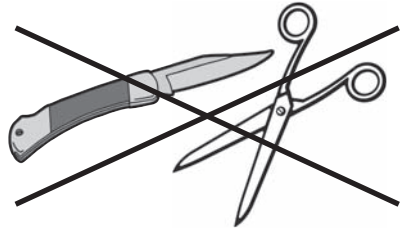


Arriving at the Court – security checks

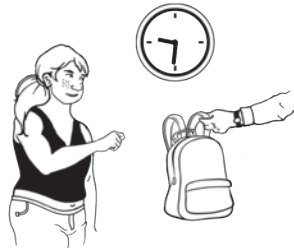
At the Court, a security person looks in the pockets and bags of people.



This is to stop people taking in things that could hurt other people.



The security person may ask you to leave your bags or other things with them.



You will be allowed to take any pills or medicine you need with you.



The security person will give bags or other things back to you when you leave.



Arriving at the Court – what happens next

Unless you have made special arrangements, you should go to the reception desk or speak to the security guard and tell them who you are. They will be happy to help you.



If you have a solicitor, tell the person at reception or a member of court staff and they will try to find them.



If you have a solicitor and barrister, they will talk with you in private about your case.

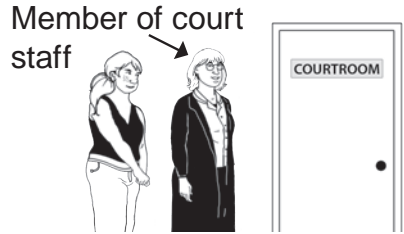


You may have to wait a while before you go into the courtroom.



The first time you go into the courtroom – telling the Court whether you did the crime

A member of court staff (or a prison officer) will take you into the courtroom.



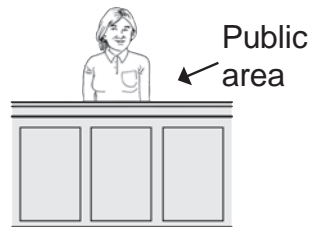
You will sit in a place called the **dock**.



The judge sits behind a big desk called the **bench**.



If you have someone with you for support they can sit in an area for the public.



A member of court staff will ask your name and whether you did the crime or not.

'Not guilty' means that you say you did not do the crime.

'Guilty' means that you say you did the crime.



If you say you did not do the crime, you may have to go back to the Court on a different day, to show the Court you did not do the crime. This is called a **trial**.



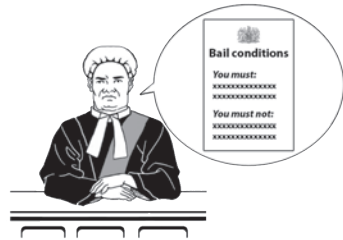
If you say you did the crime, usually you have to go back to the Court on a different day, so the judge can tell you what will happen to you. This is called a **sentence**.



In some cases, the judge may say you have to go to prison while you wait to go back to the Court for your sentence or trial.



If you do not go to prison, the judge may say there are things you must and must not do while you wait to go back to the Court. These are called **bail conditions**.



If you have a solicitor or barrister, you can ask them to explain the bail conditions to you.



If you have a trial – who does what

The judge is there to make sure that the trial is fair for everyone.



Twelve people who are called the **jury** will listen to what is said in court and decide whether or not you did the crime.



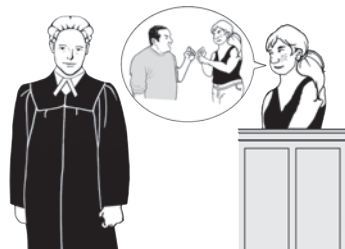
A **prosecution lawyer** will be there. They are a barrister who will tell the jury why they think you did the crime.



If you have a barrister they will tell the jury why you say you did not do the crime.



You may be asked questions about the crime by the prosecution lawyer and your barrister. You will be asked to promise to tell the truth. It is very important that you do so.



If you have a trial – victims and witnesses

Saying what you know about a crime in the Court is called **giving evidence**.

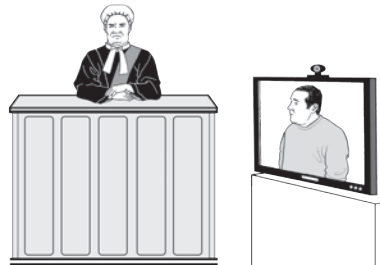


Someone who knows something about a crime is called a **witness**. The witness gives evidence from a place called the **witness box**.

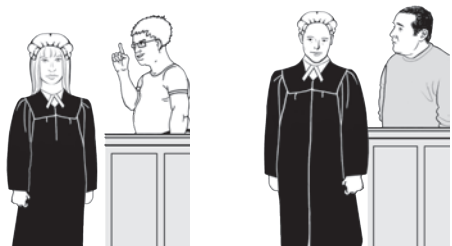
A **victim** is someone who says they were harmed by someone who did a crime.



Some victims or witnesses may give evidence using a TV link or from behind a screen. These are called **special measures**.



Victims and witnesses may be asked questions about the crime by both the prosecution lawyer and your barrister.



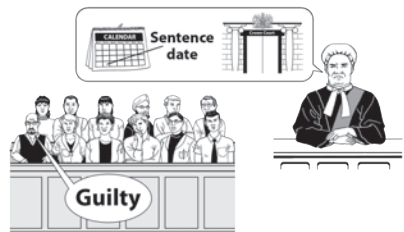
If a jury decides you did not do the crime

If the jury decides that you did not do the crime, they will say that you are not guilty.



If a jury decides you did the crime

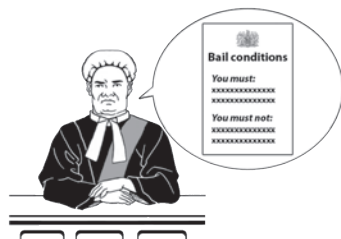
If a jury decides that you did the crime, they will say you are guilty. Usually you will have to go back to the Court on a different day so the judge can decide what will happen to you.



The judge may say you have to go to prison while you wait to go back to the Court.



If you do not go to prison, the judge may say there are things you must and must not do while you wait to go back to the Court. These are called **bail conditions**.



If you have a solicitor or barrister, you can ask them to explain the bail conditions to you.

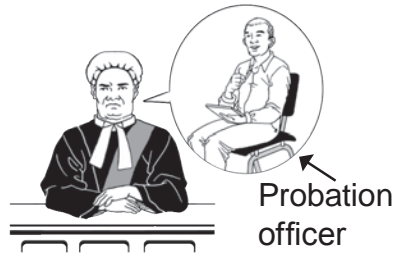


If you don't do what the bail conditions say, you could be arrested and taken to Court so that a judge can decide what should happen to you.



What can happen while you wait to go back to the Court

If the judge wants to know more about you before deciding what to do, he will ask someone to talk with you. This person is called a **probation officer**.

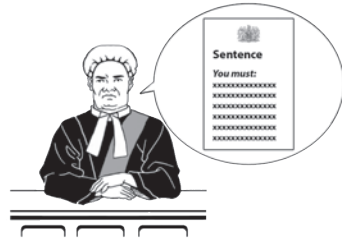


After the probation officer has talked with you, the probation officer will write a report for the judge to read.



Going back to the Court to be sentenced

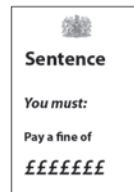
When you go back to court the judge will say what will happen to you. This is called a **sentence**.



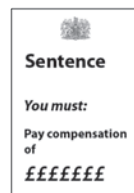
If you have a solicitor or barrister, you can ask them to explain the sentence to you.



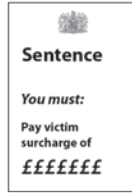
You might have to pay some money to the Court as a punishment. This is called a **fine**.



You might have to pay money that will be sent to the victim. This is called **compensation**.



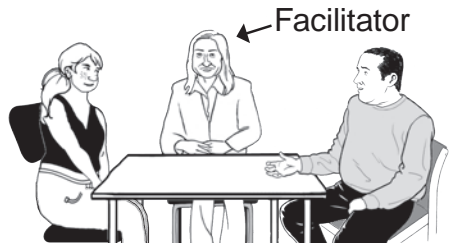
You might have to pay some money that will be sent to people that help victims and witnesses. This is called a **victim surcharge**.



You might have to do work without being paid. This is called **community service**.



If both you and the victim agree, you might meet with them to talk about the crime. This is called **restorative justice**.



You might be given a **probation order**, a list of rules that you have to promise to obey.



You might have to meet regularly with a probation officer, so that they can see that you are not getting into trouble.

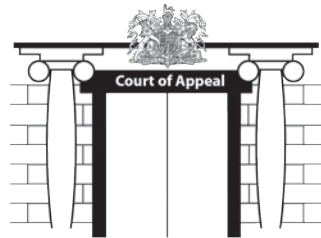


You may have to go to **prison**. This may be because you did a serious crime, or have been sentenced for crimes before.



Appeals

If you think there is a good reason, you can ask another court to look at your case again. This is called an **appeal**.



If you have a solicitor or barrister, you can ask them to explain appeals.



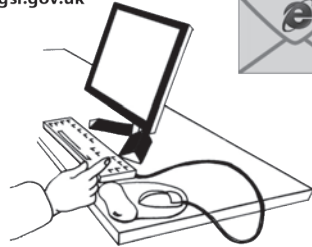
What do you think of this booklet?

If you want to tell us what you think of this booklet, you can send us an email, to:

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@justice.gsi.gov.uk**

Criminal_Justice_R
@justice.gsi.gov.uk

email

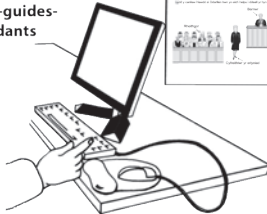
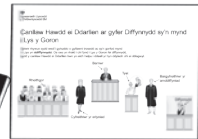


Other copies of this guide

This guide is available in Welsh on the internet at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/going-to-a-crown-court-easy-read-guides-for-defendants>

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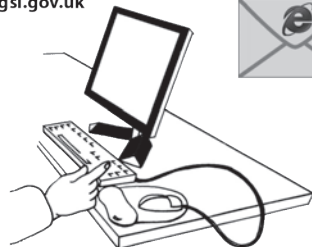


If you would like this guide in another way, such as Braille, please tell us what you would like by sending an email to:

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@justice.gsi.gov.uk**

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email



Thank you for helping with this guide

We would like to say thank you to these people for helping us write this guide:

Working for Justice Group
(supported by KeyRing and Prison Reform Trust)

The Virtual Defence Advisory Group

We would like to say thank you to these people for helping us draw the pictures in this guide:

Change



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The GCS Design Centre