



Ask for things to be explained if you are not sure what has been said or done. It is not your fault if you don't understand!

Make sure you ask your lawyer or YOT worker to show you any reports about you before they are given to the court.

A video link means you don't go to court. The court sees you on a TV screen and you see the court on another TV screen from the room you are sat in.

Video Link

Make sure you tell your lawyer if these things don't happen.

- Be given food, water and something to read or do.
- Have support which can include visits from family.
- Never be put in a cell with, or be really close to, adults.

should...

You may have to wait in a cell on the days you are at court. You

Court Cells



- **Dress smartly.** Not everyone has smart clothes so speak to your lawyer or YOT worker if this is a problem.
- **Behave respectfully and speak clearly** even if you feel upset or angry. Ask your lawyer what you might be asked before you go in.
- **Be on time.** Make sure you know where you need to be and when. Plan how to get to court.

It might feel old fashioned, but courts are formal and you will be expected to...

There are lots of long and unusual words used in court. Lots of people don't understand some of the things that are said or even what sentence they have been given.

Court can feel like a strange place

At Court

After Court

You might be given a community order or jail sentence.

A Community Order

- This lets you stay in the community but tells you to do or not do certain things.
- Your YOT worker will tell you what you need to do. You must follow the rules as part of your community sentence or you could go back to court or even get sent to jail.
- Tell YOT if you have problems so they can help you.

Jail

- There are different types of secure places you can go to. Talk to YOT about what support you will need in jail.
- When you leave jail you will be on licence or supervision. This means you must follow set rules or you could go back to jail. Tell YOT if you have problems so they can help you.

After Sentence

- If you think your sentence is unfair talk to your lawyer, YOT worker or supporting adult. You might be able to appeal your sentence if it is too harsh or the judge got something wrong.
- Your lawyer must tell you if you should appeal. Appeals from the youth court should be within 21 days of the sentence. Appeals from the crown court should be within 28 days of the sentence.
- Tell your YOT worker quickly if you have not heard from your lawyer. Sometimes you can get permission to appeal after the deadline.



If you do go to jail, help is here...

The Howard League gives legal advice over the phone to people in prison who are under 21 years old. You can call our **FREE** advice line on **0808 801 0308**.



Medical Experts

Your lawyer might want to ask a medical expert to meet you and give their opinion about how you are, why you might have done the crime, and what support you might need. They might be a doctor or a psychologist.

The report may say what life is like at home or in care; whether or not you're going to school; and explain if you have any health or learning needs.

Your YOT worker has to ask you lots of questions. This is to help them understand why you did what you did so you get the right sentence. Talk to them!

For most sentences, your YOT worker should write a report for the court called a Pre-Sentence Report. It should help the court better understand your life and why you did what you did.

Pre-sentence reports

Ask for help to sort out issues in your life like housing and education to help you to get a better sentence.

There are things you can do which can make a difference Take control! It helps to show the court you can change by accepting help and keeping out of trouble. Show family, friends, YOT workers and other supporting adults how you are changing so they can tell the court.

Before court

Howard League for Penal Reform

The Sentencing Journey

Being in court and waiting to be sentenced can be a confusing and scary time

This guide is to help you feel more in control

Who can help?

Lawyers

- Your lawyer is on your side and works for you.
- They should keep in touch to tell you what is happening and when.
- It is their job to make sure the court knows what is happening in your life so they can see why you might have committed the crime and whether you need help.



Youth Offending Team (YOT)

- It is their job to find out information about you and explain things to you.
- They help the court decide what sentence to give you. They usually suggest a sentence to the court.
- They watch over young people who are given a community sentence or who go to jail to make sure they get help inside and when they come back out.

Supporting Adults: family or carers, social workers, teachers, youth workers, family friends

- They are there to support you to cope with what is happening -talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling.
- They can help your case by writing a 'character reference' for your lawyer to show the court.
- You can ask for an adult to support you and sit next to you at court.

Take control of your future. Ask for help if you need it.
The Howard League for Penal Reform, 1 Ardleigh Road London N1 4HS
Registered charity No. 251926 Company Limited by guarantee No. 898514
www.howardleague.org

If you are unhappy with your lawyer, let them know!
All lawyers must explain how you can complain about them. If they don't listen, tell an adult.