

After court

You might be given a community order or jail sentence.

A Community Order

- Allows you stay in the community but tells you to do or not do certain things.
- Your YOT worker will work with you so you know what you need to do. You must do the things as part of your community order or you could go back to court or even get sent to jail.
- Tell YOT if you have problems so they can help you. You can complain about YOT if you do not feel you are being listened to.

Jail

- There are different types of places you can go to. YOT should support you whilst you are in jail. Talk to them about what might help you, like contact with family and sorting out finances.
- 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**.

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 legal team 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 going on in your life so they can see why you might have committed the crime and whether you need help.



Youth Offending Team (YOT)

- YOT will need to find out information about you to understand why you did what you did and to help you sort out your life. They should also explain things to you
- They help the court decide what sentence to give you. They may suggest a sentence to the court.
- They work with young people who are given a community order 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.

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.



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Take control of your future. Ask for help if you need it.

Before court

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.

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

Pre-sentence reports

The court may ask your YOT worker to write a report called a Pre-Sentence Report. It should help the court understand your life better and why you did what you did.

Your YOT worker has to ask you lots of questions to understand why you did what you did so you get the most appropriate sentence. Talk to them!

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.

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.



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

At court

Court can feel like a strange place

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

- **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.



Court Cells

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

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

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

Video Link

This is when 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.

Rules the court must follow

The court has to follow rules when you are sentenced to make sure your welfare is considered. These rules are called the 'overarching principles for sentencing children and young people'.

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!