

# What some of the words mean

**Accused:** When the prosecution tells the court you did a crime, they are accusing you of doing it.

**Defence solicitor:**



A solicitor (or barrister) is someone who is trained in the law. The defence solicitor is the lawyer who will help you in court to say what you think happened. If you have no money, you can get “**legal aid**” (money from the government) to pay him or her. The defence solicitor will help you fill in

the form to apply for legal aid.

**Appropriate adult:**



The police must provide an appropriate adult to support any suspect being interviewed at a police station who has

- an intellectual disability
- mental health needs
- autism
- physical health needs like epilepsy or cerebral palsy
- difficulties with speaking, hearing or seeing.

The appropriate adult could be from your family, or a person who helps you where you live, or a nurse, or someone else who has had special training. The appropriate adult has to make sure that you are told everything in a way that you understand. And that people understand you when you speak.

The appropriate adult also has to make sure that you are treated properly. The appropriate adult must be with you if the police ask you to sign anything or if the police talk to you on tape. He or she must be with you if you are asked to provide a sample, like your DNA (from a mouth swab), or some

of your hair or blood. The appropriate adult must also be with you if the police decide to charge you. Tell the police if you don't know anyone who can help you. The police will find someone.

**Custody officer:** The custody officer is a police officer. The custody officer's job is to look after all the people who are under arrest. Tell the custody officer if you need to take tablets or have other health needs or if you feel ill or upset. You should also tell the custody officer if you need support from an appropriate adult.

**DNA test:** This is when the police take some cells from your mouth. It does not hurt. Everyone's cells are a bit different. The police can use the cells to help them decide if it was you that did the crime or someone else.

**Bail:** This is when the police or a court decides you can go home to wait for the next time you come to court. Sometimes the bail conditions say where you must live or that you must go to a particular place. Sometimes there may be other conditions.

**Plead:** If you tell the court you did do the crime, you plead **guilty**. That means you say you did do it. If you tell the court you did not do the crime you plead **not guilty**. That means you say you did not do it.

**Usher:**



The usher shows people where to go in the Magistrates' Court.

**Magistrates:**



The magistrates are in charge of what happens in court. Their job is to listen to what everyone says and decide if the person did the crime. They also decide the sentence.

**Remand (in custody):** This is when the court decides you have to go to prison or to hospital to wait for the trial. Sometimes the court asks the psychiatrist or psychologist at the hospital to write a report about you. The report goes to the court next time you go.

**Special measures:** The court can allow special measures, which means special help. This may mean that some of your evidence can be given by video from a different room so you do not have to sit in the court. It may mean you can have an intermediary to support you to understand the court and to help the court understand you.

**Intermediary:** This is someone who is an expert in communication. Usually it is a speech and language therapist who has special training. They will find out what you can and can't understand and write a report for the court. Their job is to make sure the court understands you, and you understand the court.

**Pre-sentence report (or PSR):** This is the name for the report the probation officer writes, to help the court decide what to do.

**Prosecution solicitor (or barrister):**



This is the lawyer who will say in court that you did a crime. He (or she) does not talk to you outside the court about what really happened. In court he sometimes seems to be horrible to you, but he is just doing a job.

**Crown Prosecution Service (CPS):** This is the name for the lawyers who look at the facts the police collect about your case. They decide if you should go to court or not. Lots of lawyers work for the Crown Prosecution Service.

**Oath:** In court you have to promise to tell the truth about what happened. You can put your hand on the Bible to promise or on another religious book like the Koran. Tell the usher what religion you believe in so he/she can give you the right book. If you are not religious you can just promise. This is called affirming.

## Probation officer:



This is a person who works for the probation service. Probation officers write reports for the court. Their reports help the magistrates decide on the sentence for someone who has done a crime. A probation officer may visit you at home to speak to you and the people who know you when they write their

report. Sometimes the court asks a **mental health worker** for advice too (see below). Probation officers also help people who have done a crime to stop doing any more crimes. They are told who to help by the court.

**Sentence:** This is what the magistrates say will happen to you if they think you did the crime. There are lots of different sentences. The sentence might be any one of the things in this list:

- To go to **prison**
- To go to a **psychiatric hospital** or a **hospital for people with intellectual disabilities** or a **secure hospital** under the Mental Health Act. This means that you won't be able to leave the hospital until the doctors and social workers think you are ready.
- To go on a **guardianship order** under the Mental Health Act. This means that you have a guardian. The guardian is often a social worker. He or she can tell you:
  - where to live
  - or to go to a day centre or do certain activities
  - or to go for treatment
  - or to do all of these things
- To go on a **community order**, which will mean seeing the probation officer lots of times. Sometimes the court adds conditions to the order. The court can tell you:
  - where to live
  - or to go to a day centre or do certain activities
  - or to go for treatment

- To do some **community service**, sometimes called **community payback**. This means working in the community at some kind of job. The magistrates will say how many hours you must do. The probation officer will talk to you about what you will do. The probation officer will check you do it. You do not get paid for this job.
- To not commit another crime. There are different sentences that mean this, for example, a **conditional discharge** or a **suspended sentence** or **being bound over**. These sentences mean that you can go free but you must not do another crime. If you do another crime, or get into trouble you may have to go back to court.
- To pay a **fine**. This means you have to pay some money. The magistrates will say how much you have to pay.
- An **absolute discharge**. This means you can just go home. You do not have to do anything special.

### **Mental health worker:**



There are different kinds of mental health workers. They include community nurses, clinical psychologists, and psychiatrists. Usually, mental health workers work together as a community learning disability team (see Useful resources). They give you support and treatment so you are less likely to go on trial again. They also support the

people who care for you, like your family or support workers at your house.

Sometimes the court asks a mental health worker for advice when they are deciding on the sentence for a person who has done a crime. The mental health worker will meet the person and write a report for the court.

**Criminal record:** If you have been found guilty of a crime in court, your name, address, the crime and the sentence are written down. The police will put this information on the police computer. This list of people and their crimes can be looked at by the police whenever they like. They can also keep your photo and fingerprints and DNA which they took at the police station.

If you are found not guilty in court, your name does not go on this list. Then you have not got a criminal record and the police have to throw away your photo and fingerprints.