



# Your Guide to Going to Court





This document uses some difficult words.

Some of the words are explained here:



## **Defendant**

Someone who might be guilty of a crime.



## **Evidence**

This can be things that the police have found that support the case like weapons, clothes, photos.



A person who saw the crime take place can also give evidence by telling the court what they saw. These people are called witnesses.

## **Prosecutor**



This is a lawyer who works for The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The CPS is part of the government and they decide if a case should go to court.



If someone breaks the law they will be punished. This could mean they are sent to court.



If you see a crime take place this means you are a witness. You may be asked to go to court if you have witnessed a crime take place.



A case will only go to court if there is enough evidence.



This guide is to help you understand what might happen if you have to go to court.

# Is there enough evidence to go to court?



The prosecutor will look at the evidence to make sure there is enough to make a case.

They will also check that the evidence is correct and has not been made up.



If the prosecutor does not have enough evidence, it would be hard for them to prove that the person who did the crime is guilty.



This is why it can sometimes take a long time for a case to go to court.

Police need a lot of time to get all the information that they need.

# Helping you give evidence



Sometimes it can be hard or stressful to give evidence.

**Special measures** can help you give evidence in a different way.

This could be:



- Playing a video of you giving evidence

- Giving your evidence from a different room on a live television link



- Having the members of the public taken out of the court room so you can give your evidence in private

- Giving your evidence from behind a screen



- Having someone to support you while you give your evidence.

# Helping you give evidence



It is important that you let the prosecutor know if you would like any special measure.

You can also meet the prosecutor and talk to them if you are afraid.



You may be asked to write a statement to tell them why you want special measures.



Then the court will give you a yes or no answer to your request.

## What if you don't want to give evidence?



You may have to give evidence even if you don't want to.

This will only happen if the procecuter thinks it is very important for the case.

# What if you don't want to give evidence?



You will get support to help you give evidence if you are afraid.



If the court think that anyone has frightened you to stop you giving evidence, then they will tell the police.

Then the police will look into this.



If this happens, the court will be asked to hold the case until the police have investigated.

The police will also make sure that you are safe.

## Supporting you at court



Being in court can be hard and stressful and the CPS will do everything they can to help you.

# Supporting you at court



The prosecutor will introduce themselves and help you feel more comfortable. They will answer your questions, but they are not allowed to talk about the case with you.



If you need an interpreter one will be arranged.

You will get money back if you have had to pay for things like travel.



There is a Witness Service run by Citizen's Advice. They can give you support and go to court with you if you need them.

## Where to go for help



National Domestic Violence Helpline – 0800 2000 247

Available 24 hours a day. Run in partnership between Refuge and Women's Aid.



# Where to go for help



Sv2 Support for victims of sexual abuse:

Tel: 01773 746 115

Web: [www.sv2.org.uk](http://www.sv2.org.uk)



Women's Aid:

Tel: 0808 2000 247

Web: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)



Men's Advice Line:

Tel: 0808 801 0327

Web: [www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)



ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

Childline:

Tel: 0800 1111

Web: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)



NSPCC:

Tel: 0808 800 5000

Web: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

The Adult Care Information Promise – a **FACT** you can rely on.  
We promise to provide you with:



**Free** information  
**Accurate** information  
**Clear** information  
**Trustworthy** information

If you think we have broken our **FACT** promise, please let us know  
so we can make improvements.

Call Derbyshire 01629 533190

Adapted by Derbyshire County Council from  
'A Guide to Going to Court' by People First LTD