



THE COURT PROCESS & OUTCOMES

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS

We're here to support you every step of the way

1 CHILD ARRESTED
Your child is arrested on suspicion of committing an offence.

2 POLICE STATION & INTERVIEW

- ✓ Your child has the right to an **Appropriate Adult** (this could be you, or someone from an Appropriate Adult Service).
- ✓ They will be offered **legal representation**.

3 DECISION TO CHARGE
If your child has responded no comment, denied the offence, or the offence is considered too serious to be suitable for an Out of Court Resolution, they may be charged to court if there is enough evidence to do so.

4 BAIL OR RELEASE UNDER INVESTIGATION
Your child may be:

- Put on police bail (with conditions such as a doorstep curfew, not contacting co-defendants or the victim, or other conditions).
- Released under investigation (no conditions).

The aim of bail conditions is to prevent further offending. If bail conditions are not followed, your child can be arrested and brought back to court.

5 COURT SUMMONS
If your child is charged to court, you will receive a court summons in the post with the date, time and court details.

6 PARENT/CARER SUPPORT IS IMPORTANT
It is important a parent/carer attends court with your child. We understand this can be overwhelming and your child may not understand everything that is said, so your support is vital.

7 ARRIVAL AT COURT
You arrive on your court date and are met by the court usher. They will let the court know you are in attendance and direct you to the duty solicitor or to your own solicitor.

8 IN THE COURTROOM
When it is time, you and your child will be called into the courtroom. Only people who need to be there will be present: Youth Justice Service, the bench (magistrates), CPS, solicitor, legal advisor and yourselves.

9 PLEA
The clerk will ask your child for their name, date of birth and address and read out the offence. Your child will then enter their plea.

10A PLEAD NOT GUILTY (NG)
Another court date will be set for a trial. The court may release your child on:

- Unconditional bail (no conditions), or
- Conditional bail (e.g. curfew, appointments with Youth Justice Service, not travelling to certain places).

The aim is to prevent further offending. If bail conditions are not complied with, your child can be arrested and brought back to court. A young person may also be remanded into local authority accommodation or youth detention accommodation if the offence is serious enough.

10B PLEAD GUILTY
The clerk will read out the alleged offence. Your solicitor will speak and share information that may help the bench understand what led up to the offence. The bench may also ask if there is anything the young person or parent/carer wants to share before deciding the outcome.

SOMETIMES A DIVERSION OUT OF COURT IS POSSIBLE
If a young person has made no admissions in interview (as advised by their legal representation) but intends to plead guilty at court, and the offence is lower level, the Youth Justice Service may have a conversation with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to consider diverting the case to an Out of Court Resolution (OOCR). If they agree, your child's solicitor will sign a form called 'Section 10 Admissions' which is signed by the young person, parent/carer, CPS, solicitor and Youth Justice Service.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

(Decisions aim to support your child and prevent further offending)

REFERRAL ORDER
A community sentence for young people aged 10 to 17 who are in court for the first time and plead guilty. It requires the young person to attend a Youth Offender Panel and agree to a rehabilitative contract rather than being sent to custody.
⌚ 3 - 12 months

YOUTH REHABILITATION ORDER (YRO)
Community sentences tailored to the needs of the individual child, the risk of harm and the risk of re-offending. Each sentence includes different requirements. There is no minimum period for a YRO but they can last up to three years. Additional requirements can be added, e.g. a curfew monitored by an electronic tag or an exclusion zone monitored by GPS.

YOUTH REHABILITATION ORDER WITH INTENSIVE SUPERVISION AND SURVEILLANCE (ISS)
Imposed when the offence committed is imprisonable. It is more intensive and the young person will often have a timetable of appointments and activities to complete through their week to prevent further offending.

DETENTION AND TRAINING ORDER (DTO)
A custodial sentence for young people aged 12 to 17 in the UK. Given for serious or multiple offences. It lasts anywhere from 4 months to 2 years. The sentence is split evenly – the first half in custody, the second half supervised in the community with licence conditions.

CONDITIONAL DISCHARGE
A sentence where the court finds the young person guilty but imposes no immediate punishment. In return, the young person must stay out of trouble for a set period (between 6 months and 3 years). If they commit another crime, they can be re-sentenced.

ABSOLUTE DISCHARGE
The most lenient sentence a court can give. When a young person is found guilty of a minor offence, the judge decides that the experience of being taken to court and convicted is punishment enough. No further penalties or supervision are imposed.

WHAT PARENTS/CARERS SHOULD KNOW

- ✓ Ask questions if anything is unclear – it's okay to ask for things to be explained.
- ✓ You can speak to the duty solicitor or your own solicitor if you have concerns.
- ✓ Your support makes a big difference.
- ✓ Stay calm and reassure your child – they are in a safe, formal environment.
- ✓ The court process can feel intimidating, but there are people there to help you.

NEED SUPPORT?
Your Youth Justice Worker or solicitor are here to support you and your child. Don't hesitate to ask for help.