

Being charged with a crime

1. Overview
2. Bail
3. Remand

1. Overview

If you are charged with a crime you will be given a 'charge sheet'. This sets out the details of the crime you are being charged with.

The police will decide if you:

- can go home until the court hearing - but may have to follow certain rules, known as 'bail'
- are kept in police custody until you are taken to court for your hearing

Your first court hearing after you are charged with a crime will be at a magistrates' court or a 'virtual court' using video technology - even if your trial will be at a Crown Court later on.

Young people

If you're under 18, your first hearing will usually be at a youth court.

If you're under 17, the police must arrange for you to be held in local authority accommodation, if possible, before you go to court.

If you're aged 12 to 16, the police can decide to keep you at the police station if they think it will protect the public.

2. Bail

You can be released on bail at the police station after you've been charged. This means you will be able to go home until your court hearing.

If you are given bail, you might have to agree to conditions like:

- living at a particular address
- not contacting certain people
- giving your passport to the police so you can't leave the UK
- reporting to a police station at agreed times, eg once a week

If you don't stick to these conditions you can be arrested again and be taken to prison to wait for your court hearing.

When you attend your hearing at a magistrates' court or a 'virtual court' - video conferencing in court - you might be given bail again until your trial begins.

Reasons you may not be given bail

You're unlikely to be given bail if:

- you are charged with a serious offence, eg armed robbery
- you've been convicted of a serious crime in the past
- you've been given bail in the past and not stuck to the terms
- the police think you may not turn up for your hearing
- the police think you might commit a crime while you're on bail

3. Remand

If the court decides to put you on remand it means you will go to prison until your hearing at a magistrates' court.

If you are under 18 you will be taken to a secure centre for young people, not an adult prison.

You will probably be put on remand if:

- you have been charged with a serious crime, eg armed robbery
- you have been convicted of a serious crime in the past
- the police think you may not go to your court hearing
- the police think you may commit another crime while on bail
- you have been given bail before and not stuck to the terms

When you attend your hearing at a magistrates' court, you might be put on remand again until your trial begins, even if you were previously given bail.

<https://www.gov.uk/charged-crime>