Witness Service

Youth

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Youth court

A youth court is a type of magistrates' court for defendants aged between 10 and 17. Like a magistrates' court, it is led by three magistrates or a district judge. Youth courts do not have juries, and they are less formal than an adult court.

For example, youth courts are not open to the public and young witnesses will be called by their first name. If a case with a young defendant is heard in a Crown Court, judges will not wear formal wigs and gowns like they would in an adult court.

Any witness under the age of 17 will be automatically eligible for special measures. These are adjustments a court can make to help a witness achieve their best evidence. However, child defendants are not automatically given special measures.

What powers does a youth court have?

A youth court deals with cases such as theft, burglary, antisocial behaviour and drugs offences. If it is a serious crime like rape or murder, it will be passed to a Crown Court.

Find a youth court

You can find contact details and more information on courts and tribunals in England and Wales at the GOV.UK website.

Inside a youth court

This interactive courtroom provides more detailed information about who is who and what to expect in a youth court. Click the button below to explore the courtroom.

Explore Courtroom