

Timestamp: 00:00:00:09 - 00:00:04:09

Teen: Who are the people at a magistrates' court?

Timestamp: 00:00:04:11 - 00:00:33:08

Narrator: There will be many people at court, but they all want you to be as comfortable as possible so you can give your best evidence. One district judge or three people called magistrates, decide the outcome of the trial, called a verdict. They are helped by a legal adviser, who explains the law and makes sure everyone follows the rules. Lawyers ask witnesses like you questions so they can find out what you know and understand what happened.

Timestamp: 00:00:33:10 - 00:00:54:26

Narrator: Court staff will help you and make sure you know where to go. Supporters from the Witness Service are there to help you and answer any questions you may have. You may also see an intermediary. This is someone who helps witnesses to communicate with the court. They can help you if you do not understand any language the judge or lawyers use.

Timestamp: 00:00:54:28 - 00:01:16:27

Teen: Where will I give evidence?

Narrator: You might give evidence in the courtroom, or from a separate live link room. A live link room is a private room where you give evidence by speaking to the district judge or magistrates and lawyers through a TV screen, like a video call. You sit in front of a TV that has a camera attached.

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Narrator: This camera is linked to the court, so you'll appear on a TV screen in the courtroom. The people in the courtroom will be able to see you on the screen, but you will only see the person who is asking you questions. If you give evidence in the courtroom, you will be in front of the judge or magistrates and lawyers in the witness box.

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Narrator: Everyone in the court will be able to see and hear you, but you may be able to have a screen or curtain around you so you will not have to see the defendant (the person accused of the crime).

Teen: What happens on the day?

Narrator: When you arrive at the court, you'll go through an airport style security check. This helps to keep the court safe - everyone who enters the court building goes through it. You'll go through an archway security detector, and anything you've brought with you may be checked. After this, you can go to the witness waiting area to wait until you're called to give evidence. You'll meet a supporter from the Witness Service. They can sit with you in the waiting area and talk to you about what it will be like when you give your evidence.

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Narrator: They can also answer any questions you have, but they cannot talk to you about your evidence or any details about the trial. The district judge or magistrates and the lawyer may come to speak with you in the waiting area to introduce themselves. If your statement was recorded on video, you'll be able to watch this to refresh your memory a few days before coming to court.

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Narrator: But if you made a written statement, you'll be able to read this while you're waiting in the waiting area. There may be other witnesses in the waiting area who are giving evidence in the same trial as you, or other trials. It's important not to talk about your case with any other witnesses, either when you're in the witness waiting area or during any breaks.

Timestamp: 00:03:03:16 - 00:03:22:17

Narrator: You also must not post about the case on social media. You may have to wait before giving evidence, so you might want to bring a drink and something to eat. You may be asked to take a sip of your drink during the security check to prove it's safe. You can bring a book, phone, tablet, or game to pass the time while you're waiting.

Timestamp: 00:03:22:19 - 00:03:49:00

Narrator: If they help you to focus or keep calm, consider bringing a fidget toy or sensory aid. When it's time for you to give your evidence, a member of the court called an usher will come to collect you and show you where to go.

Teen: I'm nervous about giving evidence.

Narrator: Coming to court can be daunting. But you're not alone. There are many people who can help and support you.

00:03:49:03 - 00:04:06:27

Narrator: You're doing something brave and helpful. Your voice is important, and the court wants to hear what you have to say.

Narrator: Watch our next video, 'How do I give my evidence at court and what happens next?', which explains more about giving your evidence as a witness and what it will be like.