

Pre-Sentence Reports in the Youth Court

When someone is convicted of an offence (that means either pleaded guilty or found guilty after trial) the Court sometimes asks for a Pre-Sentence Report before sentencing.

The Youth Offending Service is responsible for preparing the Pre-Sentence Reports on young people (10-17 years old).

A Pre-Sentence Report is a written report containing information relevant to the offence(s) and the young person's involvement in it. The purpose of the report is to provide information which will assist the Magistrate/Judge in deciding the most appropriate sentence.

You will be contacted by someone from the Youth Offending Service who will arrange a time to visit and interview you. It is important that both you and your parents/carers are seen. It is likely that you will need to be seen more than once.

What information will the Report contain?

The Magistrates will want to know why you committed the offence and how you feel about it now. You will be asked about your personal circumstances – how things are at home now and how they were at the time of the offence.

If you are still at school, then your school will be contacted to see how you are getting on. If there is a particular teacher you would like them to talk to about the report you should make this clear.

If there are previous convictions of any kind, then the court will know about them. The person from the Youth Offending Service will need to discuss them with you.

Who sees the Report?

- You and your parents.
- Your Solicitor.
- The Magistrates.
- The Court Clerk.
- The Crown Prosecution Service.

If there is anything in the report which you feel is untrue or you are unhappy about, you should talk to the person from the Youth Offending Service and if necessary, tell your Solicitor.

The report will not be seen by the Police or your school and will not be read out loud in Court.

The Magistrates may ask questions about the Report.

What happens in Court?

The Crown Prosecution Solicitor tells the Magistrates about the circumstances of the offence. They will also be given details of previous convictions and cautions.

Your Solicitor will speak to the Magistrates on your behalf.

The Magistrates will then take the Report and read it – usually they leave the Court to do this. When they return they may have some questions before they pass sentence. The person from the Youth Offending Service preparing the report will have proposed a sentence to Court although the final decision rests with the Magistrates. The person from the Youth Offending Service will discuss the possible outcomes and you should make sure you understand what will be required under the sentence.

If at any time you have any queries or concerns about Court you should contact the Youth Offending Service officer or your Solicitor.