## WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

Whilst there are no hard and fast rules about what you should wear to Court it is important to realise that Courtrooms are formal places of law and it creates a good impression if you turn up dressed smartly and your appearance is neat and tidy.

## WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

In most circumstances you will not have to bring anything with you to Court. Your Legal Representative will ensure that all necessary documents are lodged with the relevant Court office prior to your appearance.

In the event that you are required to bring something with you to Court on the day you will be expressly advised to do so by your Legal Representative.

## HOW WILL I KNOW WHICH COURT TO ATTEND?

Your Legal Representative will inform you which Court you should attend via letter. In the event that you are unsure how to get to the Court please contact us and we will provide any assistance we can.

Your Legal Representative will inform you of the time you are required to arrive at court.

## CAN I BRING SOMEONE WITH ME?

Yes. It is possible to bring a friend or family member with you for support. They will not be able to speak for you and there may be occasions when your Legal Representative needs to discuss matters with you in private.

## IS THERE A HEARING AID LOOPING SYSTEM?

## IS THERE DISABLED ACCESS?

Yes.

## WILL THERE BE A JURY?

No. Your case will be heard in a Civil Court and a single Judge will decide the outcome.

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

This is a very common question and one that is very difficult to answer. The length of time you are at Court will depend on how many other matters the Judge has to hear that day. You should be prepared to be at Court for the whole day.

## CAN I USE MY MOBILE PHONE OR TABLET DEVICE?

No. Please ensure that all your electronic devices are switched off when you enter the courtroom.

## WHEN YOU ARRIVE

We will meet you on arrival and we may use the public address system to have you called if necessary. We will introduce you to your Barrister (a specialist lawyer trained to speak and present your case to the Judge).

Your Barrister will have full details of your case, however they will still want to have a short meeting with you prior to the hearing of your case.

## NEGOTIATIONS

At any stage prior to the hearing of your case before the Judge there is still a chance that it could 'settle'. It is quite common for parties to come to an agreement even immediately before a hearing begins.

Your Legal Representative or Barrister will inform you of any settlement proposals put forward by the other party and it will then be your decision to accept and 'settle' your case, or decline and 'run' your case.

## THE PROCESS

Your Barrister and your Legal Representative will explain the court process with you on the morning of your hearing and if you have any questions/concerns please do ask.

## THE HEARING

When the time comes for you to speak in court it is likely that you will be nervous. This is normal and to be expected.

Usually, as the Plaintiff in the case you will be required to give your evidence to the court first. Your Barrister will address the court initially and then you will be invited to the witness 'box' in order to provide your evidence.

You will be shown where to go and advised by the court clerk to address your answers to the Judge.

## REMOTE HEARINGS

Certain cases may be suitable for remote hearing via video conferencing, arranged by the Court by 'Sightlink' which allows parties to meet virtually from any type of device. Connection details will be provided to you in advance of the hearing date. You can therefore join your Sightlink hearing from anywhere but it is important to bear in mind that even if you are attending remotely, the Courtroom remains a formal place of law. Please ensure the following for the purposes of any remote hearing; you are smartly dressed; you are in a quiet and private place free from disruption or distraction; you are in a well lit area and your face is clearly visible; your device is on charge or is fully charged; your microphone is muted when you are not speaking; .

In relation to the hearing itself, the process as outlined above will apply.

Please note that it is an offence to record proceedings and this includes video, audio, screenshot/screengrab.

## THE OATH/AFFIRMATION

Upon your arrival in the witness box you will be asked to either swear a religious oath or a non-religious affirmation, the choice of which is yours, confirming that your evidence to the court will be wholly truthful.

## THE JUDGE

In the County Court you should address the Judge as 'Your Honour'.

In the High Court you should address the Judge as 'My Lord'.

## EVIDENCE

Try to use simple language wherever possible. Try to speak in short sentences.

It is important to make sure you speak loudly and clearly as the Judge needs to hear what is being said.

Judges can find it frustrating when they cannot hear clearly.

Speaking slowly and facing the Judge can be an important tip when giving your evidence. It is normal when nervous to speak faster than normal. Try to avoid this as it is likely that the Judge and Legal Representatives involved in your case will be taking notes of what you are saying.

A good way to make sure that the Judge is keeping up is to keep an eye on their pen.

When you finish your sentence, if the Judge is still writing, wait until they stop writing.

## CROSS EXAMINATION

After you have answered questions from your own Barrister the Defendant's Legal Representative will then ask you their questions.

This is called a cross-examination. The hints and tips from the 'Evidence' section will also be helpful for during your cross-examination.

## THE JUDGEMENT

When all the evidence has been heard and the Judge has had time to consider all the evidence before them they will deliver their 'Judgement'.

This is essentially their decision on the outcome of who will 'win' the case. Occasionally, Judges will deliver long and complicated judgements which can be difficult to understand.

If there is any element of the judgement which you are unsure about then it is important that you ask your Barrister or Legal Representative for clarification.

JMK Solicitors

Useful information for

# GOING TO COURT

If you scan the below QR Code with your smart phone / tablet device,you can view the addresses of all Courts in Northern Ireland.

You can also view the addresses of all Courts in Northern Ireland by visiting the following link.

**www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/information-our-court-offices**

www.jmksolicitors.com

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JMK Solicitors

JMK Solicitors are totally committed to ensuring that you achieve the best possible outcome at the end of your legal journey with us.

If there are any further questions or concerns you may have in relation to your court attendance or any aspect of the legal process please do not hesitate to contact your Legal Representative.

We pride ourselves on being able to provide you with a prompt and personal service.

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Useful information for

# GOING TO COURT




## Thinking about going to Court can be a daunting experience.

You will be our priority throughout the Court process and your JMK Solicitors Legal Representative will be on hand to address any queries or concerns you may have on the day.

This short guide will explain what you should expect when your case goes to court and provide you with some key tips to help you along the way.