Nel campo della giustizia civile, le procedure e i procedimenti in corso avviati prima della fine del periodo di transizione proseguiranno a norma del diritto dell'UE. Il portale e-Justice, sulla base di un accordo comune con il Regno Unito, conserverà le informazioni pertinenti relative al Regno Unito fino alla fine del 2024.

Defendants (criminal proceedings)

Inghilterra e Galles

Please note that these factsheets apply only to England and Wales. If you want to know your rights in other parts of the United Kingdom, see the separate factsheets for Scotland and for Northern Ireland. These factsheets explain what happens if you are suspected or accused of a crime which is dealt with by a trial in court. For information on minor road traffic offences, which are usually dealt with by a fine, see Factsheet 5. If you are the victim of a crime, you can find full information about your rights here.

Summary of the criminal process

The normal stages in the criminal process are as follows:

The police investigate whether a crime was committed and by whom. They collect evidence.

Having identified a suspect, the police, if they think it necessary, can arrest the person and question them on the offence.

If the police think that the suspect may have committed a crime they consult the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) about whether to charge him – that is, make a formal accusation to be tried in court.

The CPS decides on suitable charges and serves a formal document on the suspect describing the allegation.

Before the trial, court hearings find out how the accused intends to plead, and check the case is ready for trial.

The prosecutor presents the evidence at trial. The accused may also present evidence in his defence. Serious cases will be decided by a jury and less serious cases by magistrates.

After all the evidence is heard, the magistrates or jury declare a verdict.

If the accused is found guilty, the judge determines the sentence.

The decision can be appealed

The factsheets give details about these stages in the process and about your rights. This information is not a substitute for legal advice and is intended to be for guidance only.

Role of the European Commission

Please note that the European Commission has no role in criminal proceedings in Member States and cannot assist you. Information is provided in these factsheets about how to complain and to whom.

Click on the links below to find the information that you need

1 - Getting legal advice

2 - My rights during the investigation of a crime

Investigation and arrest

Interview and charge

Court appearances before trial

Preparation of the case before trial

3 - My rights during the trial

4 - My rights after the trial

More information about appeal hearings

5 - Road traffic offences

Related links

Crown Prosecution Service

Liberty Guide to Human Rights

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