



Irlanda do Norte

## Rights of defendants in criminal proceedings - Northern Ireland

These factsheets explain what happens when you are suspected or accused of a crime which is dealt with by a trial in court. For information on road traffic offences, which are usually dealt with by a fixed penalty (fine), see [Factsheet 5](#).

If you are the victim of a crime, you can find full information about your rights [here](#).

Please note that these factsheets apply only to Northern Ireland. If you want to know your rights in other parts of the United Kingdom, see the separate factsheets for England/Wales and Scotland.

### Summary of the criminal process

The following is a very basic summary of the normal stages in the criminal process:

- Investigation by the [Police Service of Northern Ireland](#) of whether a crime has been committed and who committed it;
- Arrest, questioning and charging of the suspect;
- Consideration of the evidence by the [Public Prosecution Service](#) with a view to determining whether the suspect will be prosecuted;
- Preparation for court;
- Trial of the issues or a plea of guilty by the defendant (in the Crown Court for more serious offences and in the Magistrates' Court for other offences);
- Sentencing where the defendant has pleaded guilty or been convicted at trial;
- Possible appeal.

Details about all of these stages in the process and about your rights can be found in the factsheets. This information is not a substitute for legal advice and is intended to be for general 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 if you have a complaint. 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 appearance before trial
- Preparation of case before trial

[3 – My rights during the trial](#)

[4 – My rights after the trial](#)

[5 – Road traffic offences](#)

**Related links**

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Last update: 25/02/2019