



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Mánnystrie o tha Laa

www.justice-ni.gov.uk

Your legal responsibilities as a Juror





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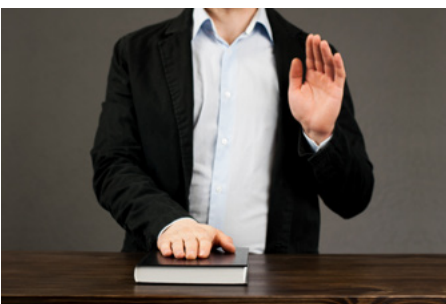


By serving on a jury, you are fulfilling a very important **public service**, and this means you have some important **legal responsibilities**.



This short note provides some **important information** about the legal responsibilities of a juror.

You **cannot** sit as a juror if you have **any connection to the case/know the defendant/any witnesses**.



As a juror you have taken a **legal oath** or **affirmation** to try the defendant based **only** on the **evidence** you hear in court.

This means the **fairness** of the trial depends on you following a few very **important legal rules**. These rules are explained to you in this Notice.



You **must read** these rules, and make sure you **understand** and **follow** them at all times, even after the trial.

The Rules



Looking for information about your Case

It is **illegal** for you to **look for or post** any information at all about your case on the **internet** or **anywhere else** during the trial.

This means you **cannot look** for any information about:

- Any **person** involved in the case. This means any **defendant, witness, complainant** or anyone associated with the case including the **Judge, legal teams and other jurors.**
- **The crime or crime scene.**
- The **Law** and **Legal Terms** used in the case.
- **Court procedures.**

It is also **illegal** for you to ask **anyone** else to **look for you.**

Media & News Stories about the Case

This also means that if you see or hear any stories about the case you are sworn to hear in the **News** you should **not pay any attention** to them.

All the information you will need to decide the case will be given to the jury in the **evidence** you hear **in Court** and the instructions on the **Law** that the **Judge gives** to the jury.



Discussing the Case

There are **two rules** every juror must follow about discussing their case.

- One rule tells you that you cannot discuss the case **during the trial**.
- The other rule tells you what you can discuss about the case **after the trial is over**.



Rule 1: During the Trial

This is from the moment you take the juror oath/affirmation until the Judge finally discharges you from serving on the jury at the end of the trial.

During the trial you should not discuss the evidence even among yourselves until you have heard all of the evidence. Once all of the evidence has been heard you can **only discuss** the case with the **other jurors** on your jury and only when you are **all together in the jury room** and there is no risk of you being overheard.

This means that during the trial you **cannot discuss** the case with **family, friends** or **anyone** else. You must also not do or say anything that may reveal the identity of any of your fellow jurors.

Discussing the case means writing or speaking about the case in person or on any **social networking sites** such as Facebook or Twitter/ X or on blogs and chat rooms. It also prohibits you from contacting the media or doing media interviews.





ILLEGAL



What if someone tries to speak to me about the Case during the Trial?

It is **illegal** for anyone who is not on your jury to **try to speak with you** during the trial about the case or try to influence you in any way about your decision in the case.

If this should ever happen it is very important that you **tell the Judge** via the **Jury Keeper immediately**.

If it happens when you are not at court, you should **call the Police on 101**.

Rule 2: When the Trial is over



Once the trial is over and you are no longer serving on the jury, you **can discuss limited aspects** of the case with anyone. There are important **exceptions**.



Even after the trial is over, you **must not discuss or post about** what was said or done by you or any other member of the jury while the jury was in the **deliberating room** trying to reach a verdict, unless it is for the purpose of an official investigation into the conduct of any juror. You must also not do or say anything that may reveal the identity of any of your fellow jurors.



For some trials including those involving **serious sexual offences** it is **illegal** to **reveal the name of the complainant** or to share any information that may allow someone to **speculate** as to who the complainant is e.g. where and when the crime took place. The Judge will alert you to this.

Collective responsibility of your Jury

All members of the jury must follow these rules. The jury **must act as a group** to make sure that everyone on the jury follows the oath/affirmation you have each made to follow these rules.



What do I do if I think any of these rules have not been followed?

If you think that any of these rules have not been followed during the trial it is extremely important that you **tell the Judge** about this **immediately**, but do not discuss it with your fellow jurors or anyone else.

You can speak with the **Jury Keeper** or you can write a note to the **Judge**.



Why do I need to follow these rules?

It is your **duty** to **report** any **breaches** of these rules by anyone, including any juror. This is necessary to ensure the trial is **fair**.

If every juror does not follow these rules the **trial** may be **stopped**, the jury dismissed and the trial will have to start again with a new jury.

This will cause **problems** for everyone involved in the case. The complainant and witnesses may be **upset** by having to give their evidence again, there will be **delays** and a lot of taxpayers' **money** wasted.



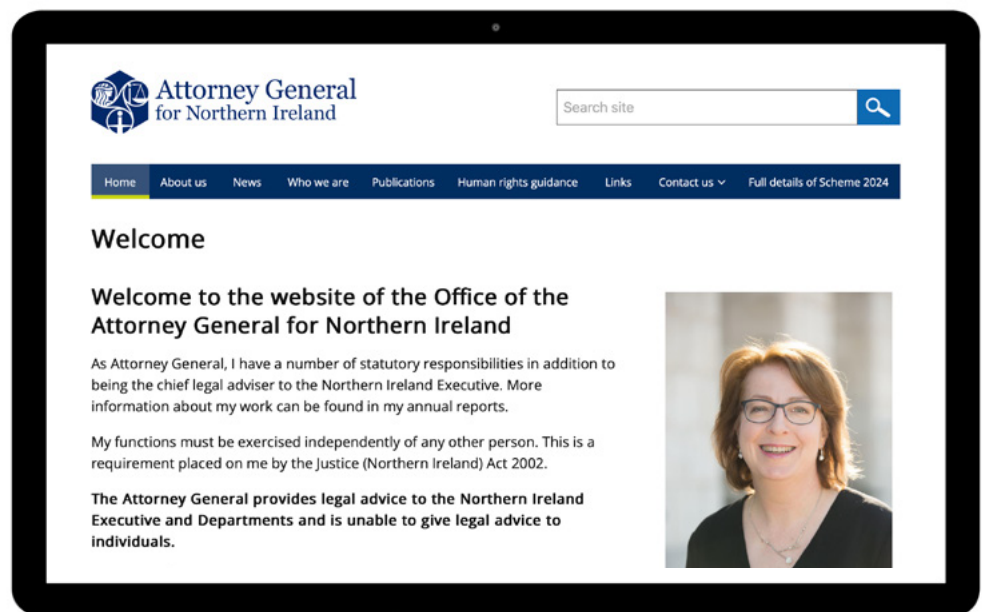
What may happen if I do not follow these rules?



It is very important you follow these rules, if you fail to do so you may be in **contempt of court** and committing a **criminal offence**. You can be prosecuted for breaking these rules.



Some additional information on Contempt of Court can be found on the Attorney General (NI) website here: attorneygeneralni.gov.uk



RULES

Help and guidance for you at any time

Before the trial begins, if you have any concerns you should **speak with the Jury Keeper, court staff or send a note to the Judge**. Once you have been **sworn** as a juror you may only communicate with the **Jury Keeper**.

Court staff and Jury Keepers are there to help you carry out your important role as a juror properly. The Judge will provide directions on your responsibilities and the legal aspects of your duty as a juror during the trial.



HOW WE CAN HELP?



SAMARITANS

What if I feel upset about my experience as a juror after the trial?

If you serve on a jury on a particularly traumatic case the judge may advise you of the specialist, court-funded counselling available for jurors. This will only happen on a very small number of cases.

When the trial is over, if you feel **upset** about anything to do with your case or if you just want to **talk** about how you felt being a juror, **help** is available.

Your **GP** can help you find free counselling services. You can also talk to the **Samaritans** any day at any time you like in your own way about whatever is bothering you, no matter how small it may be.





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