



Criminal Justice Social Work Reports

The court has asked for a report, called a Criminal Justice Social Work Report, to be prepared about you, before you are sentenced. This leaflet provides helpful information on what to expect while the report is being put together, what will happen to the report and what it is for.

What is a Criminal Justice Social Work Report?

This is a report which provides information about you and your past and current offence(s). It provides useful advice to the court to help it make a decision on which sentence to impose, such as a fine, community sentence or imprisonment.

Where will the interview take place?

This may vary. Most likely, you will be asked to come into the Criminal Social Work office, and if necessary a further appointment will be made with you in your home or other suitable place. If remanded, it will occur in the prison.

What sort of information will I be asked for?

You will be asked for information on:

- Your offence(s) which lead you to appearing in court as well as any previous offending.
- Your current circumstances, such as where you live and who you live with.
- Your financial circumstances, such as how much money comes into your household and what bill or debts you have to pay.
- Your health, such as illnesses or disabilities.
- Your past involvement with the Social Work service and the extent to which this helped you to keep out of trouble.

The report writer will look at this information alongside any other details available. The interview will include a discussion with you about whether you are suitable for a community sentence, where appropriate. The Social Worker will explain what this means.

Do I get to see the report?

Yes. Your defence agent will receive two copies of the report from the Clerk of Court, one of which will be for you. If you do not have a defence agent, a copy will be passed to you by a member of court staff. Sometimes the person who wrote the report, or the social worker at court, will also go over the contents of the report with you.

Will anyone else be asked for information for the report?

Yes, but it depends on your circumstances. The person writing the report will discuss with you who they plan to get information from. This may be members of your family, your defence agent and past social work records. It may involve getting your permission, for example to obtain information from your GP. Other people that it may be helpful to get the relevant information for the report may include your partner, other family members, your social worker and other services, for example, a drug or alcohol counselling service.

The information that you and others provide will be treated confidentially. However you need to know that the report will be seen by the Sentencer (the Sheriff), the Procurator Fiscal (the Prosecutor) your defence agent (solicitor, if you have one) and yourself.

Sometimes the Press are present in court. They are not given a copy of the report, but may report on any case which is discussed in the open court.

Can I refuse to give information?

Yes, but you need to think about what this will mean for your case. If the report writer does not have enough information in order to complete the report, then a letter will be sent to the court explaining the reasons why a report is not available.

What should I do once the report is complete?

Make sure that you turn up at court on time and meet with your solicitor if necessary. You will be sentenced at court and depending on the sentence; this may include working with the Criminal Justice Social Work service on a community sentence. If this is the case you may need to attend for interview, or begin your community service, either on the day you are sentenced or the following day.

Have a question you want to ask about your Criminal Justice Social Work Report?

Contact Details

Telephone: 01856873535 and ask for the Criminal Justice Team.

Address: The Criminal Justice Team, Community Social Services, Council Offices, Kirkwall, KW15 1NY.

Email: criminal.justice@orkney.gcsx.gov.uk .