

### 3. Your welfare and wellbeing

- **Custody staff are here to look after your welfare and wellbeing.** They carry out a 'risk assessment' to understand your welfare needs whilst you are here, usually when you are booked-in.
- For them to help you, it would be best to **share any details of your needs with custody staff. If you prefer, you can do this privately.**

- **Healthcare professionals** are also here to help, so let the staff know if you need medical assistance or medication.
- The **Liaison and Diversion team** identify people who have mental health needs, learning disabilities, substance misuse issues, or other vulnerabilities, such as neurodivergence. Support is provided whilst someone is in police custody or by making a referral to relevant support agencies outside of police custody.



- Remember, these professionals are **not police officers** – they're there to help you. They support custody staff too, providing information to help them decide if you're vulnerable and about your fitness for detention or interview.
- If you're considered **vulnerable** whilst in police custody, for example, if you have a mental health condition, learning disability, are neurodivergent as you are autistic or ADHD, or are under the age of 18, you **have the right to have an Appropriate Adult.**

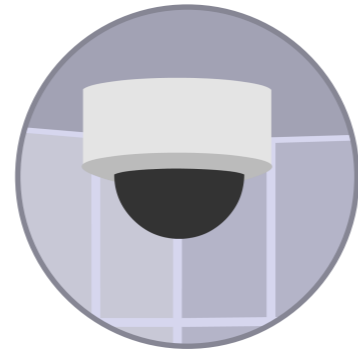
- The job of an Appropriate Adult is to **help you understand your rights and entitlements and will help protect these rights, your interests and welfare.** They'll also be present, for example, in your police interview, alongside your lawyer, if you've requested one. Your Appropriate Adult might be your parent or guardian, if you're under 18, or it may be a trained volunteer.
- **If you think you might be vulnerable or if you're under 18, tell the staff so they can arrange for an Appropriate Adult** if needed. Staff can also explain how to identify if you are vulnerable. See also the definition of vulnerability in PACE Code of Practice C, which you can request and read.
- **Female detainees** can ask to speak privately to a female staff member; they can help with your welfare needs. If you need **menstrual or menopausal healthcare products, they're free.** If you're **pregnant or breastfeeding,** tell a member of staff who can provide any necessary support.
- If you have **caring responsibilities for dependents,** tell a member of staff who will help you to organise alternative care if necessary.
- The custody staff will offer you **food and hot and cold drinks at breakfast, lunch and dinner, but if you need something between those times, ask,** and they will try their best to help. Just be patient if they are busy. **Different dietary needs can also be accommodated** (e.g. vegan, halal, gluten-free and other allergies).
- **If you lose track of time in custody, just ask a staff member for the time.**

### 4. Your safety and security



- For your safety and wellbeing, the staff may need to **temporarily remove some of your personal items** (e.g. your mobile phone) during your time in custody. They'll be stored safely in the custody suite.
- Your belongings will be **returned to you upon your release, unless they're required as evidence, in which case they may keep them.**

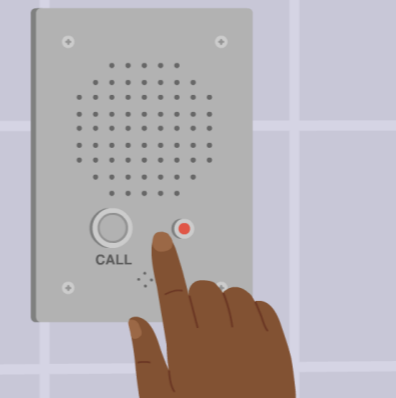
- Everyone detained in police custody is given a pat-down search and/or search with a metal detector wand. **In some cases, you may also be strip-searched, for example, if the police believe you have things on you which are not allowed,** such as items that might cause harm to you or are evidence. Strip searches must be carried out by officers of the same sex and in a place where it cannot be seen by people who do not need to be present.



- The custody suite has **CCTV cameras in all areas,** including the booking-in desks, corridors and cells. These cameras are crucial security measures to **protect you, other people in custody, and staff.** These cameras capture **pictures and sound.**
- However, the **footage of the toilet area in the cells is pixelated,** meaning it is 'greyed out' on the CCTV screen, so you have privacy when using the toilet.

- **Custody staff will regularly check on you** day and night to ensure your safety and wellbeing. This could be **every 15, 30 or 60 minutes.**

**If you have any questions or concerns while you're here, speak to the custody staff. You can use the in-cell call button whenever you need to talk to them.**



Produced by Professor Layla Skinnis, University of Sheffield, drawing on the 'good' police custody study  
[sheffield.ac.uk/law/research/good-police-custody-influencing-police-custody-policy-and-practice](https://sheffield.ac.uk/law/research/good-police-custody-influencing-police-custody-policy-and-practice)

Approved by  NPCC  
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# DETAINEE CUSTODY INFORMATION

## What you need to know while you're in police custody



 University of Sheffield

Centre for Criminological Research

 POLICE  
NORFOLK & SUFFOLK  
working together for you

 Economic and Social Research Council  
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 Custody  
Staff  
Police  
Custody  
Suite

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## 1. Your time in police custody and your treatment

- If you're reading this, you've been arrested and detained in police custody because you're suspected of being involved in a crime.
- During **arrival and booking-in** at the custody suite, you:
  - Will have been informed of your **key rights and entitlements** in police custody, including your **right to free and independent legal advice and to have someone informed of your arrest**.
  - May have been searched and had your possessions temporarily taken away. These will be bagged and stored safely by custody staff until you are released, unless they're needed as evidence, in which case the police will keep them. **If there are essential items that you need (e.g. inhalers, stims, spectacles), please ask staff.**
  - Will probably have had your **photograph and fingerprints** taken by the police. You may also have had a **DNA sample** taken.
  - Will have been asked questions to help custody staff understand if you have any **medical conditions or additional needs** that you need support with when in custody.
- Any of the following **people might provide this support**:
  - **NHS Liaison and Diversion** staff identify and support people who have mental health, learning disabilities, substance misuse or other vulnerabilities.
  - **Healthcare Professionals**, such as nurses or paramedics, look after your medical needs.
  - Drug and alcohol workers provide support and onward referral for substance misuse.
  - **Appropriate Adults** help you understand your rights and entitlements and will help protect these rights, your interests and welfare.
  - **Police custody staff can help you access support from these organisations at any point, so please ask them.**

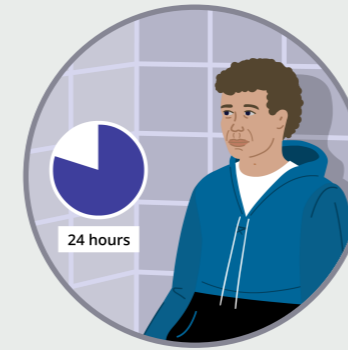
- You could also meet **different police custody staff with different roles**:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ <b>Custody Sergeants</b> manage the custody suite to ensure you're treated in accordance with the law.</li><li>◦ <b>Detention Officers</b> assist custody sergeants and look after your care and welfare in police custody.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ <b>Police Inspectors</b> check on and review your detention within 6 hours and every 9 hours after that and inform you of the review's outcome.</li><li>◦ <b>Investigating officers</b> investigate what has happened and might also interview you.</li></ul> |
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- If they're at the police station, you may also speak to **Independent Custody Visitors**. They're members of the public and conduct checks on police custody on different days and times.

- **After booking-in**:
  - You'll have been **placed in a cell** on your own and will remain there **until the police are ready to interview you**.
  - **The police can typically detain you for up to 24 hours**, though this could be longer, depending on the seriousness of what happened.
  - **Before your interview, you have a right to speak with a lawyer in private.** The lawyer is independent and does not work for the police. You won't have to pay for their services in police custody.

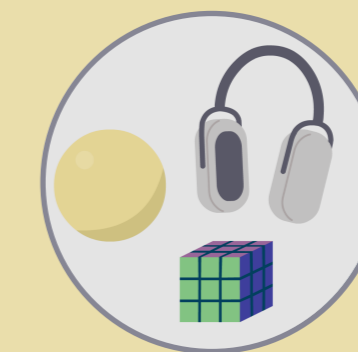


- **The police will interview you** in a private room, and the interview must normally be electronically recorded. You'll be asked about the suspected crime.
- **A lawyer is there to protect and advance your legal rights, including in the police interview.** They can advise you on how to manage the interview, including whether or not and how to respond to police questions.

- After your interview, a decision will be made about what happens next.
  - You may be **charged, bailed, or released under investigation, or the police may decide not to take further action against you**.
  - If you're **bailed or released under investigation**, you'll be asked to return to the police station another day after the police have completed further investigations.
  - If you're **charged and your bail is refused**, you'll be taken to the next available Magistrate's court, which may be the following day.
  - If you're **charged and bail is granted**, you'll be released and given an appointment to attend a Magistrate's court at a later date.
- The staff in this custody suite are committed to **treating everyone with decency, dignity, and legality**. We understand that every interaction with you matters; we will make every effort to:
  - Treat you with **kindness** as a fellow human being.
  - Remember, you're **innocent until proven guilty**.
  - Respect your ability to **make your own decisions** wherever possible.
- If you have any **concerns or complaints** about how you've been treated, please tell a member of staff, who will explain how to make a complaint. If you have a lawyer, you should usually speak to them about this first.
- A member of the **custody staff will visit you in your cell shortly to answer any questions** you may have after reading this leaflet.

## 2. Your rights and entitlements

- Whilst you're in police custody, it's important to understand your rights and entitlements.
- **The standard time the police can detain you is up to 24 hours** before a decision about whether to charge you is made. In some circumstances, the police can apply to **detain you for longer, up to 36 or 96 hours**, for example, if you're suspected of a more serious crime. The **average length of detention in police custody is 14 hours**.
- You're entitled to **legal advice and assistance from a lawyer. Lawyers are independent of the police, and you don't have to pay for the lawyer**.
  - If you've asked for a lawyer, you can speak privately with them **face-to-face or over the phone**.
  - You can ask the police to contact a **lawyer of your choice**.
  - **If you don't have a lawyer, or know of a law firm, you can ask the police to contact a duty solicitor.** Duty solicitors are a specific type of lawyer trained to work in police stations. They're independent of the police, and are **available 24/7**.
  - **Even if you haven't requested a lawyer now, you can change your mind anytime.** You can let staff know by using the call button in your cell or when they come to check on you.
- **You'll also be asked if you want the police to notify someone of your arrest. You may also be able to make a phone call**, such as to a family member or friend, though this may not be permitted in certain circumstances e.g. if you're arrested for a serious matter and these phone calls may harm the collection of evidence.
- **If English is not your first language or you have a hearing impairment**, the police can arrange a **free interpreter**. Interpretation will be provided either in-person or over the telephone.
- While in custody, you can **ask for a range of items from police custody staff, when appropriate, to help you feel more comfortable**.



- These could be **something to read, sensory equipment** or other distraction items like a soft football, Rubik's Cube, or a pen and paper. They could also be **religious items** like your holy book or a prayer mat.
- You can also **get fresh air in the exercise yard**, although the police decide when you can do this.
- **A washing kit** can be provided so you can wash, shower and clean your teeth. You can do this in private. **You can also ask for toilet paper.**

- **You may also request further important information**:
  - Police and Criminal Evidence Act Code C describes in detail your rights and the rules police officers must follow concerning the detention, treatment, and questioning of suspects held in police custody.
  - The 'Notice of Rights and Entitlements: A Person's Rights in Police Detention' booklet summarises your rights while in custody.
  - Access to an animation you can watch in your cell, summarising information in this leaflet.
- Please remember that all of **these rights are here for your protection, so ask for assistance from custody staff, or your lawyer or your Appropriate Adult** if you have one.