

So you got bail?

- > **Wondering if bail conditions really matter?**
- > **Thinking of not turning up at court?**
- > **Thinking of applying for legal aid?**
- > **Thinking of pleading guilty?**
- > **Here are some things you need to know.**

Think your bail conditions don't matter?

If you don't stick to the conditions of your bail; or if you don't turn up at court on the set date, **you are in breach of bail**. This means:

- > You are likely to be arrested.
- > Your bail may be withdrawn.
- > You may be remanded in custody.
- > You may not get bail in the future.

You must keep in touch with your solicitor.

If you don't turn up for meetings with them, they may not be able to help you properly.

Applying for legal aid?

You should see your solicitor before your first court date with proof of wages/benefits. This will help complete the forms and speed up your claim.

If you skip bail

You are committing an offence. This means:

- > A warrant will be issued for your arrest.
- > You can expect to be prosecuted for 'failing to appear'.
- > You may end up with a prison sentence for 'failing to appear'.
- > You may not get bail in the future.

The case may go ahead without you. This means:

- > You can be tried and convicted in your absence – and being absent won't help your case.

If you think you are too ill to attend

- > A medical certificate stating that you are 'unfit to work' is not enough.
- > You must provide a full medical report from a doctor, stating that you are too ill to attend court.

Thinking of pleading guilty?

- > Tell your solicitor as soon as you can.
- > If you do not have a solicitor and want to plead guilty, tell the court as soon as you can.

If you plead guilty at the first opportunity:

- > You are likely to get a *reduced sentence*.
- > This could be by as much as *one third* of what you would get otherwise.

If you plead not guilty:

- > The court will ask you or your solicitor the reasons for this.
- > Your trial may start in six weeks, so make sure you are ready.

If you ask the police to have other offences taken into consideration at court:

- > You may be prosecuted for those offences if you later choose not to admit them when in court.

Still think all this doesn't matter?

YOU ARE WRONG.

You are not just delaying things, you are making them worse.

So do yourself a favour:

- > If you are going to plead guilty, do it early.
- > Stick to your bail conditions – all of them.
- > Turn up at court when you are supposed to.
- > The trial or any other hearing could go ahead without you unless the court thinks there is a very good reason not to.

Please note:

- > When you are on bail you are personally responsible for complying with any conditions set by the police or the court.
- > Only the police or the court can release you from these conditions.