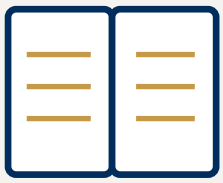
Going to court

For Autistic adults in Ireland

Easy read • words and pictures

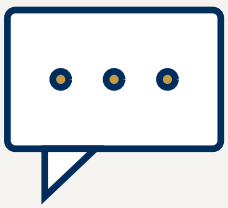


For Autistic adults going to court in Ireland.



You can read one part at a time.

You can ask someone to read with you.

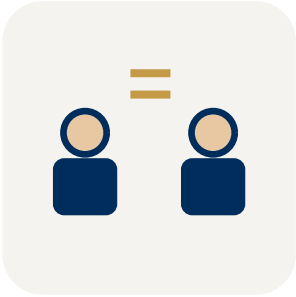


This guide gives general information.

Ask a solicitor for legal advice.

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

Asking for help



You can ask for changes that help you take part in court.



You do not need medical evidence to ask the court office for help.



You choose whether to tell people you are Autistic.

You choose who to tell.



The judge decides about changes inside the courtroom.

You may not get every change you ask for.

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

Getting legal advice



A **solicitor** is a lawyer.

A solicitor can give you legal advice.



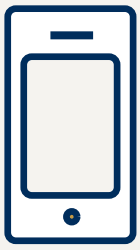
If you are accused of a crime, you can ask the judge about **criminal legal aid**.

Criminal legal aid pays for a solicitor.



The judge may ask you to fill in a form about your money.

The judge decides whether you get criminal legal aid.

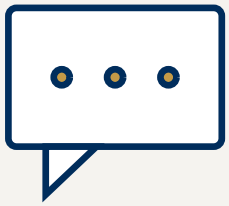


For other cases, ask the **Legal Aid Board** whether it can help.

Phone **066 947 1000**.

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

Choosing what to share



Tell your solicitor what helps you communicate.

Your solicitor can ask the court for changes.



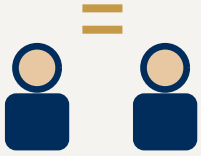
The **court passport** is a form about your needs.

The form starts on page 14.



You can give your solicitor a copy of your court passport.

You can choose to share a relevant medical letter if you have one.



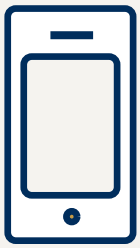
An **advocate** helps you say what you want and need.

Ask the National Advocacy Service about help with your case.

Phone **0818 07 3000**.

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

Planning your court visit



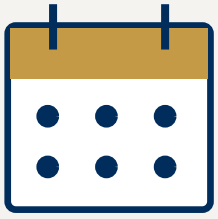
Phone or email the court office as early as you can.

Ask for the **accessibility officer**. This person helps arrange support.



Find your court office at **courts.ie/offices**.

Tell the accessibility officer which changes would help you.



Check where the courthouse is.

Plan how you will get there and how long the journey takes.



Ask about visiting before your court date.

Ask your solicitor what will happen at court.

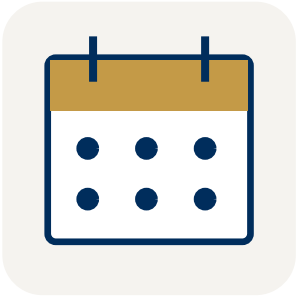
© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

Changes you can ask for



You can ask to visit the courthouse before your court date.

You can ask for a call explaining what will happen.

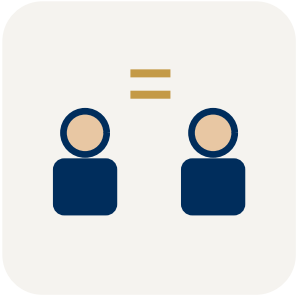


You can ask to be told if the time or room changes.

You can ask for a quieter time of day.



You can ask for a quiet place to wait.



You can ask to have your supporter with you.

Ask whether your supporter can stay in the courtroom.

The court may not be able to agree to every request.

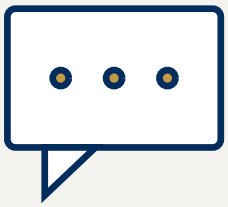
© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

Help in the courtroom



You can ask for planned breaks.

You can agree a signal to ask for a break.



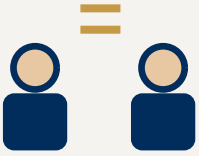
You can ask for plain words and one question at a time.

You can ask for time to think before answering.



You can ask to use headphones, sunglasses or a fidget object.

Ask about bringing water or medication into the courtroom.



A **registered intermediary** helps you communicate when you tell the court what you know.

Ask your solicitor about this help.

The judge decides whether you get this help.

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

What to bring



Bring your **court papers** and **photo ID**.

Photo ID could be your passport or driving licence.



Bring your court passport and your solicitor's phone number.

Bring a book, a puzzle book, or music on your phone with headphones for the wait.



Bring things that help you, such as headphones or sunglasses.

Bring water, food for the wait, and any medication you need.



Bring your **JAM Card**, if you have one.

A JAM Card tells staff you need extra time.

The card and phone app are free at **jamcard.org**.

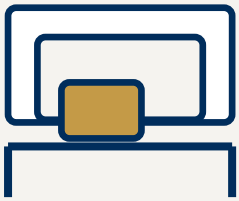
© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

When you arrive



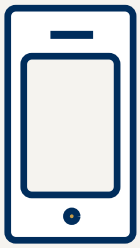
You may wait a long time.

Your case may start later than the time on your court papers.



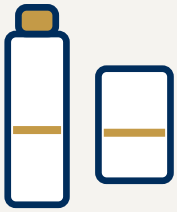
Some courthouses have security checks.

Staff check for dangerous items. They may keep some items until you leave.



Turn your phone off or to silent in the courtroom.

Do not record in the courtroom.



Do not eat in the courtroom.

Ask staff where you can eat while you wait.

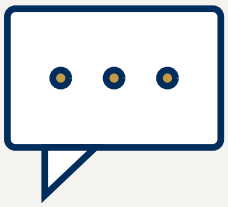
© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

How you communicate



People in court may misunderstand how you communicate.

Your face or voice may not show how you feel.



You may need time to answer a question.

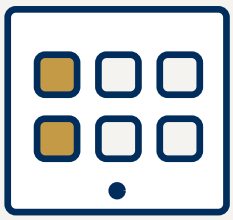
You may give short answers or find eye contact difficult.



You may feel **overwhelmed**.

This means there is more happening than you can manage.

You may find it hard to speak.



You can use a tablet, cards or writing to communicate.

These are examples of **AAC**: ways to communicate without speaking.

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

Words you can use

You can say these words.
You can also write or print them on a card.

I need a break.

I do not understand the question.

Please ask the question in different words.

I do not know.

I need more time to answer.

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

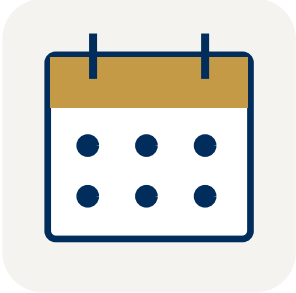
After court



Ask your solicitor to explain what the judge decided.



Ask for the decision in writing.



Ask your solicitor what happens next.

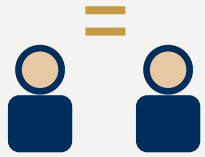
Ask when you need to do anything.



Plan time to rest after court.

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

People you can contact



National Advocacy Service

Free advocacy for disabled adults.

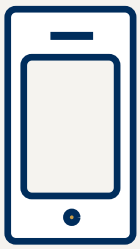
Phone **0818 07 3000**
Email **info@advocacy.ie**



Legal Aid Board

Ask whether it can help with your case.

Phone **066 947 1000**
legalaidboard.ie



AslAm Autism Information Line

Phone **0818 234 234**

Monday to Thursday, 10am to 3pm.



Your court office

Find its phone number and email at **courts.ie/offices**.

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

My court passport

This form tells people what helps you.

You can ask someone to help you fill it in.

Give a copy to your solicitor. Your solicitor can share it with the court if you agree.

My name

Courthouse

Court date

My supporter’s name and phone number

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

How I communicate

My name: _____

What helps me understand information?

What words or ways of talking confuse me?

How do I communicate when I am stressed?

What should people know about my eye contact, face or voice?

My eye contact, face and voice may not show how I feel.

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

When I feel overwhelmed

My name: _____

What are the first signs that I feel overwhelmed?

What helps me when I feel overwhelmed?

What makes feeling overwhelmed worse?

What do I do to stay calm?

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

Help I want to ask for

My name: _____

Tick the help you want to ask for.

- ☐ A visit before my court date
- ☐ A call explaining what will happen
- ☐ A quiet place to wait
- ☐ My supporter with me
- ☐ Planned breaks
- ☐ A signal to ask for a break
- ☐ Questions in plain words
- ☐ One question at a time
- ☐ Time to answer
- ☐ Headphones, sunglasses or a fidget object
- ☐ The decision in writing

Other help I want to ask for:

_____

You can attach another page with more information.

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

Documents I choose to share

My name: _____

You choose which documents to share.

☐ A letter from a psychologist or doctor

☐ A JAM Card

☐ Other documents

Other documents I choose to share

Anything else I want you to know

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.

Links and more information

Find your court office

www.courts.ie/offices

Ask about support at court

www.courts.ie/guides/accessibility-at-court

National Advocacy Service

advocacy.ie

Legal Aid Board

www.legalaidboard.ie/our-legal-aid-service/

AsIAm Autism Information Line

asiam.ie/who-we-are/infoline

Get a free JAM Card or app

www.jamcard.org

More about intermediaries

www.courts.ie/organisation-information/registered-intermediaries-register

This easy-read version is based on the full Thriving Autistic court guide by Tara O’Donnell-Killen.

The full guide includes more detail and sources.
This is a draft for review with people who use easy read.

© 2026 Thriving Autistic CLG. Written by Tara O'Donnell-Killen.
Free to share. Please do not sell or change it.