

Understanding Jury Service

Jury Service

Jury service involves twelve ordinary people, randomly selected by computer, to oversee and ensure a fair trial. The jury members will not need any specialist knowledge of the law but they must represent a cross section of society and must take an unbiased approach to the case.

What if you are selected for Jury Service?

Each jury member will receive a 'Jury Summons Letter' which will confirm the court you have been summoned to and the date and time you will need to arrive. The court date is usually around nine weeks after the Summons letter arrives. You will also receive contact details for the Jury Central Summoning Bureau, who can advise on any queries you have about Jury Service.

What must you do once you have received your letter?

You must reply to your Jury Summons within seven days of receiving it and you will receive a confirmation pack from the Jury Central Summoning Bureau. This contains further information, such as how to get to the court and what to expect once you're there.

Do you have to complete Jury Service?

There may be occasions where it isn't possible for you to serve at the time you have been summoned. If you are unable to serve, you will need to reply to the Jury Central Summoning Bureau and ask to be 'deferred' (so that you can serve at a later date) or 'excused' from Jury Service altogether. You can only do this once and for no more than twelve months from the original date. Your reply form will provide details on how to apply for deferral or excusal. To be completely excluded from Jury Service you will need to write to the Jury Central Summoning Bureau explaining your reasons. However, unless you have already served as a juror within the previous two years, your call-up is likely to be deferred.

Will you get paid for completing Jury Service?

You will not receive payment for Jury Service although, you are entitled to claim for food and travel allowance as well as compensation for loss of earnings from the court.

How and when can you claim?

If you wish to claim any of the above we will complete a Loss of Earnings form for you. Please be aware that there are limits on the amount that you are entitled to and if you do want to make a claim, please contact your Account Manager who will be able to advise you further.

How long does Jury Service last?

Each trial will differ, however Jury Service usually lasts an average of ten days. If it is likely that the trial is expected to last a long time, you will usually be warned in advance.

Are you allowed time off for Jury Service?

You must be allowed time off should you be summoned. You also have the right not to be treated unfairly (for example, denied a bonus) because of your call-up. Should you be sacked because you have been called up for, or completed Jury Service, you can claim for unfair dismissal. However, if you were advised by your employer that your absence would have a serious effect to their business and you did not request to be deferred or excused, the dismissal is likely to be deemed fair. Of course each case is different and will be assessed on its individual circumstances.