



## **Bail Information Service for Magistrates' Courts**

A bail information service will be provided in the Magistrates Court Monday to Friday.

Bail Information Services are targeted to reduce unnecessary remands in custody.

Courts are provided with factual and independent advice regarding bail suitability and services available.

Recipients of bail services understand the bail conditions or bail support services they must comply with whilst awaiting the outcome of court proceedings.

The key role of the Bail Information Officer is to interview defendants in order to provide factual and verified information (both positive and negative), which will help the Court decide whether to grant bail at the first bail hearing.

This information will be presented to the Court in the form of a Bail Information Report. Key recipients of the report are the Crown Prosecution Service Solicitor, Magistrates, Legal Adviser and Defence Solicitor. Probation Court teams will provide a Bail Information Service in cases where a remand in custody is being sought or may be likely, giving priority to the following groups of defendants:

- Minority Ethnic groups
- Young people (under 21 but 18 or over)
- Women
- Vulnerable defendants i.e. those exhibiting mental health issues
- Prolific and Priority offenders

Information will be provided on bail support packages provided by appropriate accommodation and support services.

The Bail Accommodation Support Services (BASS) scheme is run nationally by the Stonham organisation and provides short term accommodation with support for relevant cases in single gender, shared and self contained houses across England and Wales. Court Bail Information Officers are available to deal with any questions concerning this scheme.

The Bail Act 1976 sets out the provisions in relation to bail. Under that Act there is a general presumption in favour of bail subject to certain exceptions (for example where there is a risk that a person may fail to surrender to custody). The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 amends the Bail Act 1976 so that the certain exceptions to the presumption that bail should be granted to an adult defendant will not apply where there is no real prospect that the defendant will be sentenced to a custodial sentence.