

Public

All courts are public buildings and support the principle of open justice. Most court hearings are open to anyone aged over 14. You can find court opening times on each court web page available via the drop down menu on the Home page.

If a court is closed in the interests of justice, the public is excluded. This may happen occasionally to protect vulnerable witnesses, such as a child or the complainer of a sexual offence; or to protect confidential information.

When charged with a serious criminal offence on petition, an accused's first, early court appearance will be a private sheriff court hearing. If the case proceeds it will then be heard in open court.

Children under 14 are not normally allowed in a courtroom unless they are giving evidence, or have the court's prior approval to attend for educational purposes.

Photography, filming and audio recording are not permitted in court without prior approval. However, anyone may take written notes in court.