

Glossary of Terms

Here is a glossary of a few key terms that you might see within the SJT. Please do refer to this document to check any terms that you are not familiar with.

Bench: a bench consists of three magistrates sitting together in order to decide if the defendant is innocent or guilty

Bench Chair: a magistrate who has received extra training to act as the chair of a group of 3 magistrates. They sit in the centre of the group and speak on their behalf in court. See also 'Presiding Justice'

Defence Lawyer: speaks on behalf of the defendant and try to show that they are not guilty of the offence. They also ask the witnesses questions. Sometimes a defendant will represent themselves

Defendant: the person who has been accused of the offence. The defendant sits in the dock

Legal Advisor: a qualified solicitor or barrister that advises the magistrates on the law

Magistrate: ordinary people who hear cases in court in their community

Offence: any act contrary to the law

Presiding Justice: a magistrate who has received extra training to act as the chair of a group of 3 magistrates. They sit in the centre of the group and speak on their behalf in court. See also 'Bench Chair'

Sentencing Guidelines: guidance used by magistrates to impose a sentence for example imprisonment or a fine

Witness: the witness gives evidence and answers questions from the witness box