

What is this leaflet about?

Why have I been asked to attend an interview under Caution?

The Council has asked you to attend an interview under caution because it believes that there are grounds to suspect that you may have committed a criminal offence.

This does not mean that the Council believes you are guilty and will prosecute you, but it means that there is evidence that the council has obtained that suggests that you may have committed an offence.

The interview is your opportunity to offer an explanation of the events that have occurred, however, should evidence emerge during the interview that an offence has been committed then a prosecution or other means of sanction could follow.

Do I have to attend an interview?

No, you don't have to attend an interview; however, if you do not attend the interview this will not prevent the council from taking further action such as prosecuting you in the criminal courts.

Who can come to the interview with me?

You can come to the interview with anyone you wish.

Anyone who is not connected to the investigation can attend the interview with you – this person could be a friend, a social worker, or a relative, but **not** a Husband, Wife or Partner as we may need to interview them as well depending what is said at the interview.

If the person attending the interview with you is not a solicitor or legal advisor, they are with you for moral support only and have no right to speak, advise you or ask questions on your behalf during the interview.

You can have a solicitor or legal advisor present with you. You can appoint one yourself or your local Citizens Advice Bureau may be able to help.

PLEASE NOTE: The interview may be more formal to those that you have had before in that it will be recorded on tape, it may also last longer than thirty minutes.

We do not have any child care facilities and therefore if you do have young children it may be easier to make arrangements for them to be looked after by a friend or relative whilst to attend the interview.

Who will interview me?

You will usually be interviewed by one or two of the Council's Benefit Investigation Team. They have been specially trained to conduct these types of interviews. An interpreter may also be present.

Sometimes the Council will conduct joint Investigations with other agencies, such as the Department for Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs. If there has been a joint Investigation in your case, you may be interviewed by an officer from the Council and an officer from the other agency. If this is the case it will be made clear to you at the time of the interview.

What happens at the interview?

At the beginning of the procedure, two sealed audiocassette tapes will be given to you. You will be asked to check that the seal is unbroken. The seals will then be broken in your presence and placed in the tape recorder. The recorder will be switched on and start to record the interview.

Before you are asked any questions the officers will explain a number of things to you, including;

- That the interview is being conducted in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and that a copy of the Code of Practices for the Act is available for you to consult.
- You will be cautioned and advised of your rights (That you are not under arrest and are free to leave the interview at any time and that you may seek legal advice at any time).
- Why you have been asked to attend the Interview under Caution
- Whether you want to continue with the interview.

You will then be asked questions about your benefit claim. The council's officers are not bound to accept the first answer that you give but are under a duty to establish the truth about what has happened.

At the end of the interview you will be asked to sign a paper seal which will be used to seal one of the audio cassettes that has been used to record your interview. You will be given a form explaining how you can have access to a copy of the tape. You will only be given a copy of the tape, if requested, if you have been charged with an offence or you have been advised that you will be prosecuted.

You will also be given an information leaflet about what will happen next.

What action can the council take following the interview?

The council may decide after the interview that there is no case to answer and the matter will then be closed.

Alternatively there are three other courses of action that the council can choose to take depending on the outcome of the interview:

- Formal Caution
- Administrative Penalty
- Prosecution

Information leaflets on these options are available from the Investigation team if required.

The Interview under Caution

If you have a severe visual or hearing impediment, or English is not your first language, please contact the council proper to the interview to enable us to make appropriate arrangements to assist you.

Legal Rights

NOTICE TO PERSONS BEING INTERVIEWED

- This interview is being conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice for the treatment and questioning of persons by Local Authority staff when investigating offences, which has been prepared in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.
- The interview is to enable you to offer an explanation of the facts, though should evidence of an offence emerge, you may be prosecuted.
- **You do not have to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence.**
- You are not under arrest or detained here; you may leave at any time during the interview. If the officer is conducting the interview in your home, you may ask him/her to leave.
- You may have a friend with you if you wish.
- You may have a solicitor and/or an interpreter with you. If you choose not to have a solicitor present but decide during the interview that you want legal representation then we can suspend the interview to give you time to arrange this
- You may seek legal advice either in person or by telephone
- A copy of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act Code of Practice is available if you wish to refer to it.

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Information Leaflet

The Interview under Caution

**(If you have been asked to attend an
Interview under Caution, it is important
that you read this leaflet)**

