



Magistrates' Court Fines

A fine is a priority debt because lack of payment can lead to a prison sentence.

If you cannot afford to pay a fine as ordered by the Magistrates' or you have received a warning letter from the Magistrates', you should contact the court straight away. You should write to the court enclosing details of your income and make a proposal to pay by instalments or reduced instalments.

If you don't make an arrangement to pay, there are various ways in which the Magistrates' can collect the debt.

Methods of Enforcement

Attachment of Earnings (A.O.E.) - The Magistrates' instruct your employer to make deductions from your wages to repay what you owe.

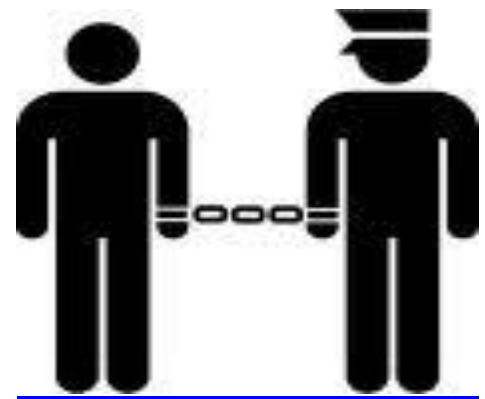
Attachment of Benefit (A.O.B.) - The Magistrates' can ask the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) to make deductions from your Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers' Allowance to repay arrears of fines.

Appointment of Bailiffs – The Magistrates' will ask bailiffs to collect the balance owed on their behalf. Whilst it may still be possible to make an arrangement, based on your ability to pay, with the bailiff you should be aware that bailiffs will usually expect you to pay the whole amount within a short period. **For more information about please see our fact sheet about bailiffs, their rights and how to deal with them.**

If these methods of enforcement have failed or cannot be used, and an arrangement to pay hasn't been made or kept to the Magistrates' may issue a summons for your arrest.

Summons/Warrant for Arrest

- If you receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' or there is a warrant out for your arrest for non-payment of fines you should act immediately.
- You should go to the Magistrates' Court and ask to see the Civilian Enforcement Officer (CEO) or ring the court on 01204 558200.



Attendance before The Magistrates

You should attend the court hearing and be prepared to explain why you haven't paid. Make sure you take with you full details of your income and expenditure.

After hearing the evidence the Magistrates have the power to:

- A. Commit you to prison if they are satisfied that you have either refused or neglected to pay but only if a full means enquiry has been carried out.
- B. Suspend the committal order by setting an arrangement for payment, which if not kept to could result in imprisonment.
- C. Adjourn the case as long as an arrangement for payment is being kept to or for further consideration.

- D. Set aside all or any part of the debt.

For further advice contact the CAB, or the Civilian Enforcement Officer at the Magistrates' Court.

Your Address
Your Name

Greater Manchester Central Accounts
and Enforcement Unit
PO Box 4372
Manchester City Magistrates' Court
Crown Square
Manchester
M61 0EQ

Date:

Re: Summons Received/Court Hearing on: _____

Reference No: _____

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have received your recent correspondence concerning my Magistrates' Court fine which I am having difficulty paying. I am willing to pay whatever I can afford to reduce the outstanding fine, but I do not want to be forced into a situation of agreeing repayments which I would be unable to meet.

* I am currently in receipt of Income Support / Income Based Job Seekers Allowance. And thus you may wish to consider asking the DWP to make deductions from my Income Support at the set rate.
(* Delete if not applicable)

My national insurance number is: _____

I enclose a financial statement, which helps to show extent of my financial difficulties.

I can only afford £ _____ per week/month towards my fine. Given this I would request that my fine be set to this level which I can afford.

I appreciate that you may not be ideally satisfied with the amount offered, but I would ask you to accept it as reasonable given my circumstances. I would further request that any further recovery action be withheld whilst I make these payments. If my circumstances improve I will seek to increase my payments.

Thank you for your assistance and I hope to hear from you shortly.

Yours faithfully,

Your Signature