



# Know Your Rights

Single Justice Procedure Notices and Minor Criminal Offences

## About The Traveller Movement

The Traveller Movement (TM) is a UK charity challenging discrimination and promoting inclusion of ethnic Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities. TM facilitates legal education, strategic litigation and direct advocacy to support their access to justice and fair treatment.

The Single Justice Procedure Notice and minor criminal offences webinar was prepared in partnership with Rosie Worster, solicitor at Commons and Clare Cruise, Southwark Law Centre.

## Watch the Webinar

You can watch this topic in short video segments [here](#).

## Information

A **Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)** is a fine issued by an official for a minor criminal offence, such as littering or some driving offences. It is an alternative to being prosecuted in court. If you pay the FPN within the specified time, you avoid further action. If you ignore it, if you don't pay, or if you contest the FPN, the case may go to court. You can be asked to go in person or sent a **Single Justice Procedure Notice (SJPN)**.

An SJPN is a paper-based procedure used by magistrates' courts for minor non-imprisonable criminal offences, allowing court cases to be decided without you attending court; offence examples include not having a TV licence or non-attendance at school (parents/carers are charged, not children). SJPNs can only be issued for adults aged 18+, but errors do happen.

If you receive an SJPN in the post, you have 21 days from the date of issuance to respond with a guilty or not guilty plea, either by post or online.

If you plead **guilty**, you can either request a sentence hearing in person, or the court can decide sentence without you coming to court. The sentence for most SJPN offences will be a fine. Pleading guilty promptly can result in a reduced fine (up to one-third off).

If you plead **not guilty**, you will be given a date to come to court and be tried. If you are found guilty, the sentence and any costs will be higher. If you are found not guilty or the case is discontinued, there will be no conviction and no costs.



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## Information (continued)

If you ignore the SJPN, the court will decide the case in your absence often resulting in a conviction and a higher fine without credit for an early plea. Penalties for driving offences can include points on your licence. If you are at risk of disqualification, the court will usually require you to attend in person.

If you've missed the SJPN, you can have the case reopened. You must apply to the court within 21 days of learning about the proceedings. If you only disagree with the sentence, you can request a hearing to explain your circumstances.

Solicitors can help, but legal aid is rarely available unless there are vulnerabilities or serious consequences such as the risk of losing employment. If someone helps you respond, make sure you fully understand the response's content.

Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities may receive SJPNs more often because of over-policing. Concerns about unfair treatment can be raised in court or as a complaint under the Equality Act 2010; seek legal advice first.

Some SJPN offences are non-recordable and so convictions may not appear on DBS checks, but it's safer to declare them if you're asked to declare criminal convictions. SJPNs should not affect school admissions or benefits. SJPNs for school non-attendance may trigger social services involvement due to safeguarding concerns. Arrest warrants can be issued for connected matters e.g. for non-payment of a fine or if further offences occur.

Always deal with SJPNs promptly; seek advice early and get support for school attendance issues.

## Contact the Solicitor

You can telephone Rosie on 020 3865 5403 and  
Clare on 020 7732 2008

Contact The Traveller Movement on  
020 7607 2002 for more help.