# Woman granted reprieve after court rules knife was for food preparation



A woman residing in her ex-partner's vehicle has been granted a reprieve from incarceration after a Leicestershire court determined that the kitchen knife found in her possession was intended for food preparation. Natasha Chamberlain, a long-term intravenous drug user, was discovered unconscious in a parked car by concerned members of the public, prompting them to alert emergency services.

The incident took place on March 28 along Buckland Road in Northfields, Leicester. Upon arrival, Leicestershire Police found Chamberlain in a compromised state, with visible infected sores on her legs. Prosecutor Sally Bedford, addressing Leicester Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, April 9, recounted the circumstances leading to her arrest, explaining, "She had a very infected leg wound and was passed out. The defendant presented as being in an unwell state. When she got out of the vehicle the police officers saw there was a kitchen knife in her handbag."

Legal precedents generally prescribe a minimum prison sentence of six months for the possession of a blade in public. However, Bedford informed the court that Chamberlain's situation was "unique." Initially, the police officers had opted to issue her a caution and referred her to Turning Point, a drug addiction charity. However, she failed to attend her appointment and subsequently received a court summons.

Bedford further illustrated that the police viewed the offence as relatively minor, thus allowing magistrates to consider a departure from standard sentencing practices. She remarked, "The entry point is six months in prison but hopefully I've already explained the unique circumstances."

Chamberlain's defence lawyer, Ziyad Lunat, elaborated on her difficult circumstances. He stated, "They are unusual circumstances indeed. She was introduced to drugs by her brothers, who were prolific offenders. They have moved on and she hasn't. Her relationship had soured, and she was not living at her partner's home but was sleeping in his vehicle on the road. She had ulcers from her previous injections of drugs." He also clarified that the knife was intended for essential tasks, describing it as "for cutting up food and things like that."

In a notable deviation from typical sentencing guidelines, the chairman of the bench, Gareth Roberts, informed Chamberlain, "Unusually, on this occasion, we're going to go outside our guidelines and we're trying to get as close as we can to the view that the police - who were there at the time - took of this offence." Ultimately, Chamberlain was handed a 12-month conditional discharge along with a requirement to pay £85 in court costs and a £26 victim surcharge. Additionally, the magistrates mandated the confiscation of her knife, advising her, "You'll have to find another way to cut up your food."

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/possession-blade-or-pointed-article-offensive-instrument> - This URL supports the legal precedent generally prescribing a minimum prison sentence of six months for the possession of a blade in public. It provides guidance on the legal framework around such offenses.
* <https://www.leicestershire.police.uk/news/leicestershire/news/2023/march> - This URL could potentially support the description of incidents involving the police in Leicester, although specific details about Natasha Chamberlain may not be available due to the nature of public police reports.
* <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/leicestershire-magistrates-court-hearings-april-2025-7054692> - This URL may provide information about current hearings at Leicester Magistrates' Court, including details about Chamberlain's case or similar ones, though the exact case details might vary.
* <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/handling-proceedings-in-magistrates-courts> - This URL provides general guidance on how magistrates' courts handle proceedings, which can support understanding the process followed in Chamberlain's case.
* <https://www.turning-point.co.uk/our-services> - This URL supports the mention of Turning Point as a drug addiction charity to which Chamberlain was referred. It provides details about their services and programs.