

Information about Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) for England and Wales

This information sheet is designed to give you an overall understanding of the prison system in England and Wales. Each prison will have specific differences for example there might be different regime structures or work opportunities, but this should give you a bit of background information to the sort of support you can expect if you are a British national, looking to transfer back to England & Wales.

What happens when I arrive at the prison?

Which prison will I go to?

British national prisoners who have returned to the UK from abroad are likely to be returned to a London prison.

What happens when I get there?

- You will be taken to the reception area of the prison, and may be held with other prisoners whilst you are waiting to be processed.
- You will be given a prison number which is a mixture of letters and numbers, unique to you.
- During induction, staff may take your fingerprints and your photograph which will be logged on your file.

Who will I meet?

- As part of the induction process, staff will tell you more about prison life and what you need to do. You should ask any questions you may have at this time.
- A member of prison staff will search you. You can ask to see a doctor if you have a medical problem which means it is difficult for you to have a full body search.
- You can ask to see a doctor or nurse if you have a health problem. Tell the doctor or nurse if you are taking any medicine, or if you have a problem with drugs or alcohol.
- If you are feeling very upset or worried about things, you should tell the doctor or nurse.
- You will be taken to the cell you will sleep in, which will normally be on a wing with other prisoners who have just arrived at the prison.
- You may be introduced to another prisoner who works as a mentor to greet and explain how the prison works to you.
- Depending what time you arrive, you will meet other staff and be allocated a personal officer.

What happens to my property?

- A member of prison staff will make a list of everything you brought with you. You may be able to keep some things as personal property. Everything else will be kept in a safe place for you which you will get back when you leave, apart from anything dangerous or against the law.
- Prison staff will give you clothes to wear - you may have to wear prison clothes if you are a convicted prisoner.
- Under the Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme (IEP), your friends and family can send certain items to you.

Will I be able to make a phone call?

- You will be allowed to make a phone call and will be told about how to arrange for friends, family or lawyer to visit you.

Visits

The prison will tell you how to arrange social visits (from family and friends).

Each prisoner is entitled to a minimum of a 30 minute social visit every two weeks. Additional visits will be dependent on the prison and can be earned through the incentive and earned privileges scheme for good behaviour.

On arrival, your visitor will usually have to leave their personal possessions (including handbags) in a locker which may be in the entrance to the prison or in a special Visitors' Centre where help and advice may also be available. Visitors then pass through a number of security checks (similar to those in an airport) before being allowed into the visits room. Visits usually take place in a large visits room where the prisoner and visitor sit either at a table or at a long counter. The prisoner is not usually allowed to move from their seat during the visit. There is sometimes a play area for young children and light refreshments may be on sale.

Some prisons organise special children's visits when a small number of prisoners are able to spend time with their children. During these visits they are able to play with them.

Conjugal visits are not permitted in England and Wales.

What will my cell be like?

You may have to share a cell with another prisoner, and who you share with will be decided by the prison, based on a risk assessment.

The majority of cells have toilets and wash basins, and prisons no longer have 'slopping out' (the practice of using a bucket in cell as a toilet and emptying it in the morning).

Healthcare in prison

Prisoners in the UK get the same healthcare and treatment as anyone outside of prison. Treatment is free but has to be approved by a prison doctor or member of the healthcare team.

Most problems are dealt with by the healthcare team. If they can't, the prison may:

- get an expert to visit the prison
- arrange for treatment in an outside hospital

The healthcare team can ask your family doctor for their records, but only if you agree to it. If you are transferring from overseas and have a medical condition, you should consent to the transfer of your medical records from the country you are transferring from.

Prisoners can get specialist support – for example if you:

- have drug or alcohol problems
- have HIV or AIDS
- are disabled or have a learning difficulty

Privileges

Prisoners who follow rules can earn privileges. This is called the 'Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme'. A prisoner may be able to:

- get more visits from family or friends
- be allowed to spend more money each week

Privileges are different in each prison - staff will be able to explain how the process works in your prison.

Prison Regime

Daily regimes in prisons vary, depending on the prison.

HMPPS is committed to serving the **religious** needs of prisoners and multi-faith services operate within prisons. You will be able to find out more about these services from the chaplaincy team within the prison.

All prisons have **gym** facilities that you will be able to access, depending upon the regime.

Courses are available to help prisoners get new skills, e.g. learning to read and write, use computers and do basic maths whilst in prison. The **education** department will assess you and make an individual learning plan, identifying **courses and training** you can complete. Most courses lead to qualifications that are recognised by employers outside prison, e.g. GCSEs or NVQs. Prisoners may be able to do a distance learning course through the Open University.

Many prisoners get the chance to **work** while carrying out their sentence, for example making clothes and furniture or electrical engineering. This is done in prison workshops and is normally paid work. You can also work around the prison itself, doing roles in places such as the kitchen or laundry.

Sentence Plan

Each prison has an **Offender Management Unit (OMU)** that will assist and support you with all aspects of your sentence structure and release arrangements. Your Offender Supervisor within the prison will work with your external probation officer to help make a sentence plan and work towards your resettlement.

This can include referrals to **offence focussed behaviour programmes** such as anger management or sex offender treatment programmes.

It might also be identified that you need **additional support** dealing with issues such as drug/alcohol addiction and so you would be referred to the organisation within the prison to deal with this.

Categorisation

In the UK, prisoners are assigned to the correct security category and allocated to an appropriate prison. Categorisation is based on the level of risk a prisoner might pose to the public or national security should they escape and the likelihood of their making attempts to do so.

Within 72 hours of your arrival in prison, the prison governor will make an assessment and assign an appropriate category. There are four different security categories for adult male prisoners in England and Wales:

Category A: are prisoners that would pose the most threat to the public, the police or national security should they escape. Security conditions in category A prisons are designed to make escape impossible for these prisoners.

Category B: prisoners who do not need to be held in the highest security conditions but, for category B prisoners, the potential for escape should be made very difficult.

Category C: are prisoners who cannot be trusted in open conditions but are considered to be prisoners who are unlikely to make a determined escape attempt.

Category D: prisoners can be trusted in open conditions.

Unless you have been deemed category A then female prisoners and young offenders are not categorised. They are only classified as suitable for open conditions or suitable for closed conditions.

Your Offender Manager will be able to talk to you in more detail about your categorisation.

How do I transfer to a different prison?

We understand that one of the reasons that you may wish to transfer back to UK is to be closer to your friends and family, and HMPPS recognises the importance that these relationships may have on your resettlement and so will endeavour to make this process as simple as possible for you. Allocation to a different prison may depend on other factors such as needing to complete a course, available spaces and your categorisation.

Each prisoner should be transferred to a “resettlement prison” 6 months prior to their release. The aim is for this prison to be close to the local area where you will eventually be released so that you can build support with local organisations who can provide assistance with things such as housing and employment.

A map of all the prisons in England and Wales has been provided on the last page of this guide.

Preparing for release

You may be allowed to leave prison for short periods towards the end of your sentence - whatever its type or length. This process is known as release on temporary licence (ROTL) and can be granted to let you out during the day – for example, to help find work for when you are released; or overnight – to spend a night at the place you will live after you are released. The prison won't release someone if it thinks they are a risk to the public or may commit more crime.

When will I be released?

There are early release schemes for prisoners in England and Wales.

When you will be released depends on:

- the length of your sentence
- your behaviour in prison
- any time spent on remand (waiting for trial)

If you are serving a fixed term (determinate) sentence, you will normally be released automatically halfway through your sentence. A Parole Board is not involved. You will be released on licence which is supervised by probation and might include conditions that you must meet for example living at a fixed address.

Prisoners can apply for parole if you have an extended sentence, or a fixed-term sentence for:

- 4 years or more
- a serious violent or sexual crime committed before 4 April 2005

If you have a non-fixed term (indeterminate) or life sentence, the government will apply for parole on your behalf.

Your eligibility for early release and any restrictions that might be imposed will be decided on an individual basis.

Probation

Under the Offender Rehabilitation Act, all offenders who have been sentenced to more than 1 day in prison will receive support from probation upon release from prison.

While on probation, you may have to:

- do unpaid work
- complete an education or training course
- get treatment for addictions, like drugs or alcohol
- have regular meetings with your offender manager

Rights

Prisoners have rights, including:

- protection from bullying and racial harassment
- being able to get in contact with a solicitor
- healthcare - including support for a mental health condition
- to spend between 30 minutes and an hour outside in the open air each day.

What do I do if I have a problem?

In the first instance, you should find someone within the prison you can talk to. This might be a member of staff or another prisoner.

Nearly every prison runs a '**Listeners Scheme**' - a peer support service which aims to reduce suicide and self-harm in prisons, run by the Samaritans. You can speak to a 'Listener' within your prison confidentially and they will be able to provide you with support.

Each prison is also monitored on a daily basis by volunteer members of the **Independent Monitoring Board (IMB)**. They monitor day-to-day life in prisons and removal centres, listening to problems of individuals and ensuring that proper standards of care and decency are maintained.

The **Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO)** investigates complaints from prisoners, those on probation and those held in immigration removal centres. It also investigates all deaths that occur among prisoners, immigration detainees and the residents of probation hostels (Approved Premises).

How do I contact HMPPS?

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is responsible for running prisons and probation in England and Wales. HMPPS is an agency of the Ministry of Justice.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS)

Clive House

70 Petty France

London

SW1H 9EX

Telephone: 0044 (0)300 047 6325

Email: public.enquiries@noms.gsi.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service>

A full list of prison establishments can be accessed at:

<https://www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/prison-finder>

A map of prison locations can be accessed at:

<https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/contacts/hmps/prison-finder/prison-map.pdf>

If you are looking to transfer back to a prison in Scotland or Northern Ireland, you need to contact:

Scottish Prison Service (SPS)

Scottish Prison Service Headquarters,
Communications Branch
Room G20
Calton House
5 Redheughs Rigg
Edinburgh
EH12 9HW
Telephone (HQ switchboard): 0044 (0) 131 244 8745
Email (general enquiries): gaolinfo@sps.pnn.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.sps.gov.uk/>

Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS)

Prison Service Headquarters
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SU
Telephone: 0044 (0) 28 9052 2922
Email (general enquiries): info@niprisonservice.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/ni-prison-service/nips-about-us.htm>

