



CUSTODY CENTRES

Category A prisons include Long Lartin and Belmarsh.

Category B prisons include Bristol, Albany, Dorchester and Exeter.

Category C prisons include Dartmoor, Dorchester, Bullingdon, Channings Wood, Guy’s Marsh and The Verne.

Category D prisons include Leyhill and Prescoed.

Young Offenders Institutions in the South West include Exeter, Bristol, Ashfield and Portland

Women’s Prisons include Eastwood Park, Drake Hall and East Sutton Park (for adults and girls under 18).

CATEGORIES

The prisoner’s escape would be highly dangerous to the public, police or the security of the state and the aim is to make escape impossible	Closed - high security	Category A
Adult male prisoners (over 21) who are a risk to the public but do not need the highest level of security and the aim is to make escape very difficult	Closed	Category B
Male prisoners aged between 15 and 21 and female prisoners who are a serious risk to the public	Closed	Restricted status
Adult male prisoners who cannot be trusted in an open prison but are unlikely to try to escape	Closed	Category C
Young prisoners aged between 18 and 21 and adult female prisoners who can’t be trusted in an open prison	Closed	Closed conditions
Adult males who are a low risk and unlikely to escape	Open	Category D
Young male prisoners aged between 18 and 21 and adult females who are low risk and unlikely to escape	Open	Open conditions

RECEPTION

On arrival in custody:

- 1) you and your property will be searched
- 2) articles you are not allowed to keep will be taken from you and stored
- 3) articles you are allowed to keep, you retain at your own risk
- 4) you will be given an identity card
- 5) you will have an introductory interview to identify your problems and concerns
- 6) you will have a healthcare interview
- 7) you should have a "Choices" interview – to assist you to sort any family issues
- 8) you will have help from "insiders" - selected prisoners to help you with information / forms
- 9) you will be given a hot meal and a drink
- 10) you may be given £2 credit for the pin phone system to phone your family / friends
- 11) (you need to provide a list of contact numbers – feel free to bring this list in with you)
- 12) you will be offered a reception amenity pack, the costs of which you repay at 50p pw
- 13) (if you have additional money, you can buy more reception packs up to a value of £15)
- 14) you may apply to have money transferred to your pin phone account
- 15) you will be given a reception letter which you can send first class to family / a friend
(if you are convicted, you will receive a reception visiting order which should be enclosed)
- 16) you will be allowed access to hot water
- 17) the next day, you will undergo induction, including release dates and allocation to other prisons

FIRST NIGHT

Some others have a first night in custody scheme.

The aim of our First Night in Custody scheme is to reduce the anxiety and distress felt by prisoners on their first night in prison. A worker will sit down with the prisoner, listen to your concerns, offer emotional support and reassurance, and provide practical assistance when needed.

Exeter Prison provides you with a First Night Information for Prisoners information booklet.

VISITING AND KEEPING IN TOUCH

To get a visit, you must send your Visiting Order to the people whom you want to visit you.

You will be given your Visiting Order when you are first convicted. You should send it out within seven days. It is usually valid for 28 days. Two weeks later, you will get another one, and you will be told how long it will be valid for.

You must write the names of the people you want to visit on the Visiting Order. Your visitors must bring it with them when they come. You can normally have up to three people (not including any children under the age of 10) on the Order, but they must all visit at the same time. You can ask permission for any children you have under the age of 10 to visit you at the same time.

If your visitors cannot come during the time when the Order is valid, they should send it back to you. You can then use it for somebody else if you want to, or you can save it for later use.

You can have a minimum of two 60 minute visits every four weeks. Most prisons try to let you have more than this, unless they are overcrowded, short of staff or short on space for visits to take place. In these circumstances, the Area Manager can reduce the length of visits to 30 minutes.

You may be able to get more visits, visits in better surroundings, or visits at more convenient times, through good behaviour, and achievement in work, or education, or participation in offending behaviour programmes. Ask an officer for more details of the incentives scheme.

If you want to visit a close relative who is in a different prison, you can apply to do this once every three months. You both have to use a Visiting Order for this visit.

You or your visitors should check with the prison before a visit to establish what can be handed in on the visit. Any authorized articles should be handed in to the Visitors' Centre/the officer in charge of visits. Should you wish to hand something out to your visitors during a visit, you will have to ask permission to do so well in advance of the visit. You cannot hand anything out on behalf of another visitor.

If you are in a prison a long way from your family and friends, you can save up between 3 and 26 visits. Normally these can only be the minimum 30 minute visits, but if visits are usually longer, you can ask the Governor if you can also save up this extra time. These are called "accumulated visits".

Six months after you are first moved from your local prison, you can apply to the Governor to be moved temporarily to a prison near where your visitors live. You will usually stay there for 28 days, and all the visits you have saved up will be taken during that time. You will have to stick to the visiting times and rules of the prison you are moved to.

You can then start saving up visits again. So, after another six months, you can apply again for another temporary transfer. Sometimes the period can be less than six months. Category "A" prisoners should use the requests/complaints form to apply for accumulated visits. All other prisoners should apply to the Governor.

You should know, however, that accumulated visits are given at the discretion of the Governor and if there is overcrowding at the prison you wish to stay in, it may not be possible for you to be granted the visits.

You will need to check with the prison what items they allow to be sent in to you by Recorded Delivery.

Searching of visitors is necessary for security reasons and for the safety of the prisoners and their visitors, including children. Your visitors may refuse a search, but the Prison has the right to refuse them entry. However if staff have reasonable cause to suspect that the visitor is trying to bring in drugs or a firearm, then they have the right to search without consent. This could be a strip search which will normally be carried out by the Police.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO VISITORS

If you are visited by a close relative who receives Income Support, Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance, Tax Credits or has a low income, they may be able to get help for the cost of visiting.

Close relative means spouse, daughter, son, mother, father, sister, brother or adoptive/step/half brother, sister, stepchild or stepparent. Partners may also qualify if you have lived together for four months or longer immediately before you were sent to prison. Proof that you live together will be required.

Eligible visitors can claim for a visit as soon as you are taken into custody, and after that, every 14 days. They can claim for two visits at a time, to a maximum of 26 visits in 12 months.

The assisted prison visits unit can be contacted at APVU, PO Box 2152, Birmingham B15 1SD.

Telephone 0845 300 1423 between 10.15-11.45 and 14.15-15.45 (Mon to Fri)

Textphone: 0845 304 0800 (for people with hearing problems)

Fax: 0121 626 3474 (24 hours)

E Mail: assisted.prison.visits@hmps.gsi.gov.uk

Websites: www.justice.gov.uk, www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk

Application forms for assistance are available from Prisons, Visitors' Centres, Benefit Agency Offices and the Assisted Prison Visits Unit.

Once your visitors have filled in the application form for the first claim, the APVU will send them their payment (normally a Giro cheque or a rail warrant) with a simpler form for their next claim. It is important to claim immediately for visits, as payment can only be made for those visits taken within the 28 days prior to the application being received at the APVU. However payment can be made in advance of the visit as long as the application is sent to the APVU two weeks before the visit is due.

If you are told you are going to be moved, you should ask straightaway for a Special Letter to let your visitors know. This letter is free. If there is not enough time to write, you can ask Prison staff to make one phone call to inform your visitors.

If you are a Category "A" prisoner, you will not be told in advance if you are going to be moved. Ask for form F1994 as you leave the prison, and fill in the names of anyone who needs to be told that you are moving. Prison staff should ring these people the same day to tell them.

If your visitors have a wasted journey because they were not aware that you had moved to another prison, they should claim their travelling costs from the prison, unless the journey was already paid for the APVU. In that case the prison will give them a note for the APVU to make sure they are paid for travelling to the new Prison.

BOOKING VISITS

Visits to Exeter Prison can be booked on 01392 415 833 or by downloading a visits booking request form http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/assets/documents/1000444Bexeter_visits_booking_form.doc and sending it by e mail to socialvisits.exeter@hmps.gsi.gov.uk . At Exeter social visits currently take place on Tuesday to Friday (14.45 to 16.45) and Saturday to Sunday (14.15 to 16.15)

CORRESPONDENCE

If you are convicted, you can send out one free letters every week – the stamps will be paid for by the prison. You can send out as many additional letters as you like as your own expense.

Normally, there is no limit to how many letters you can receive. Your letters will not usually be read, but the envelopes will be opened to make sure they do not contain anything which is not allowed. However from time to time the Governor can order that all post should be routinely read.

Similarly you can be limited on the number of letters that you send and how long they can be (though you must be allowed at least 4 sides of A5 paper), or you could be limited to receiving one letter for every one you send out. If this happens, you can choose which letter to read, and others will be sent back.

If these rules apply to you, you will be permitted to buy at least one extra letter at Christmas and up to 12 Christmas Cards and stamps from the canteen.

However letters to and from Solicitors should not be read or stopped by anyone in the Prison Service. You should write on the envelopes of these letters "Prison Rule 37A" – this is the prison rule which covers legal letters. You should then seal the envelope before you hand it in.

Prison Rule 37A also applies to letters to and from a Court. Other protected correspondence includes letters to the Samaritans and other organizations such as the Prisoner's Advice Service.

If you are a convicted prisoner and you are appealing against your sentence, correspondence between and the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) should also be treated by the Prison Service as legally privileged correspondence. You should seal your letter and write "Standing Order 5B 35A" with your name on the back.

You are allowed to write letters to newspapers and contribute to radio and television programmes or submit articles to be published, as long as : -

- a) You do not write about your own offence or past offences
- b) You do not write about other people's offences
- c) You do not write about individual prisoners or members of staff
- d) You do not break any of the rules about letters.

If the recipient of any of your letters ask the Prison Service to stop sending your letters to them, you will be asked to stop writing. Additionally, you must get permission before you write to another Prisoner at a different prison OR to the victim of your offence or their family.

If you have no private cash, the Prison will pay for the stamps on letters connected with the Defence of your case. These letters will be sent first class.

You can ask for an extra free letter: -

- a) To write to your Probation Officer
- b) If you have family problems
- c) If you arranging a job or somewhere to live on your release

The rules about letters are they must not: -

- 1) Discuss escape plans or anything which affects Prison security
- 2) Help someone commit a Criminal Offence of an Offence against Prison Rules
- 3) Contain threats of blackmail
- 4) Affect National Security
- 5) Say anything racially offensive or obscene

TELEPHONES

As a convicted prisoner, you can buy phone card from the prison shop with your private cash or earnings. You may be permitted more access to the telephone under the prison's incentives and earned privileges scheme, which means the number of calls you are allowed to make, or the times at which you are allowed to use the telephone, will be determined by your behaviour and performance in prison.

Money you spend on phone cards will count against your private cash allowance.

Phone cards cannot be sent in from outside – only special prison service phone cards will work in the prison telephones.

An official telephone maybe used if you need a Solicitor's advice. A random number of telephone calls may be listened to by Prison Officers.

INCENTIVES AND EARNED PRIVILEGES

There is a three tier system of incentives and earned privileges

- a) basic
- b) standard
- c) enhanced

As a result of consistent patterns of good behaviour and performance, you earn additional privileges and facilities. These could include:

- extra and improved visits
- eligibility to earn higher rates of pay
- opportunity to wear your own clothes
- access to private cash
- time out of cell for association

PRISON LAW

Should you need assistance with prison law at any time, we shall be pleased to refer you to prison law specialists who will be able to help you.

Dunn & Baker – Here to help you

Disclaimer: The material contained in this fact sheet is for general guidance only. It is specific to the law of England and Wales, and represents a brief outline of the law current as at the date of the fact sheet. It is not intended to constitute, or to be a substitute for, legal advice specific to your case. Dunn and Baker will be responsible only for advice specifically given to you.