



‘At Court’ information for families when a relative or friend has been sent to prison

families
outside

voicing the needs
of families affected
by imprisonment

When a family member is sent to prison, it can be a traumatic and confusing time for everyone. There will be a lot of things to sort out and come to terms with, including the shock and distress you may be feeling.

Information you need to know:

- Visiting arrangements in each prison can be different. This may depend on whether your relative/friend has been remanded or convicted. How to book a visit and what times you can visit may not be the same in each prison.
- There are rules about what items of clothing, money and other property can be taken into the prison for your relative/friend.
- Once your relative/friend has been taken to prison, he or she will be allowed to make one phone call or send a letter. If they phone you, you will hear a recorded message informing you that the call is made from HMP (name of prison) and asking if you will accept the call.
- The Assisted Prison Visit Scheme provides help with travelling expenses to families in receipt of benefits or on a low income. You can phone the **Families Outside Support and Information Helpline** (see back page), ask a Family Contact Officer at the prison or contact the Assisted Prison Visits Unit on 0845 300 1423 for more information.

How do I know which prison my relative/ friend has gone to?

All prisoners start their sentence at a 'reception' prison or a local prison such as Edinburgh, Barlinnie, Dumfries, Greenock, Kilmarnock, Inverness, Perth, Aberdeen, Cornton Vale or Polmont Young Offenders Institution. This may be where the person has already been held on remand.

Adult male prisoners given a sentence of over 4 years will often be moved to Shotts, Glenochil or Peterhead. All 16 – 21 year old males will serve their sentence at Polmont Young Offenders Institution.

Cornton Vale is the main women's prison in Scotland, holding all those under and over 21 years old. Some women may be transferred to female units within local prisons.

Who can help?

The following people may be able to assist you with information:

- Court social workers
- Court staff
- **Families Outside Support and Information Helpline**
0500 83 93 83 (see back page)
- Family Contact Officers – these are prison officers who have a specific role to offer support and help to families and assist with any queries they may have. All prisons have at least one Family Contact Officer, and some have a direct telephone number (see next section).



Scottish Prison Locations

This map shows where all the prisons are and not just those listed on the opposite page.

Telephone numbers of ‘reception’ prisons

Where there is a separate telephone number for the Family Contact Officers based at the prison, these are listed underneath the prison number.

Aberdeen (Craiginchies)	01224 238300
Barlinnie	0141 770 2000
Family Contact Officers	0141 770 2037
Cornton Vale	01786 832591
Family Contact Officers	01786 835 235
Dumfries	01387 261218
Edinburgh (Saughton)	0131 444 3000
Family Contact Officers	0131 444 3113
Visitor Centre	0131 444 3098
Greenock	01475 787 801
Kilmarnock	01563 548 800
Visitor Centre	01563 548 868
Inverness (Porterfield)	01463 229000
Perth	01738 622293
Family Contact Officers	01738 637198
Visitor Centre	01738 625 503
Polmont	01324 711558
Family Contact Officers	01324 722374

For information on how to get to a prison, call

Families Outside Support and Information Helpline
freephone number 0500 83 93 83

You may find it helpful to phone the prison and ask some of the questions below. You should ask to speak to a Family Contact Officer or, if they are not available, explain your query to switchboard staff.

- How soon can I visit?
- Can I bring money or items of clothing?
- Does the prison have a leaflet for visitors & can you send me one?
- How many people can visit at once?
- Can I bring the children?
- Can I claim help with travel expenses?
- My relative/friend has health problems and is on medication. Will the prison know about this?
- My relative has no money with them; how will they manage?

If you are worried about how your relative/friend will cope, please let someone know at the prison as soon as possible, or contact the **Families Outside Support and Information Helpline'** (see back page).

NB: The Scottish Prison Service is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998, which says that they can not give you any information without the person's written consent. Please bear this in mind when contacting the prison, especially if you are phoning them to check where or how your friend/relative is.

This space has been left blank for your own use.

Families Outside Support and Information Helpline

freephone number 0500 83 93 83

Monday to Friday 1pm - 5pm (answerphone outwith these hours.)

support@familiesoutside.org.uk www.familiesoutside.org.uk

A free, confidential Helpline for families affected by imprisonment in Scotland.

We are a completely independent service available for any family member whether you have contact with your relative in prison or not.

We can help by giving you information and support to deal with issues such as:

- **Concerns about how you will cope**
- **Information on all Scottish prisons**
- **How to claim travel expenses**
- **Visiting & what to take to the prison**
- **What to do if you think your relative isn't coping**
- **What & how to tell the children**
- **How long someone will spend in custody**
- **Housing and benefit issues.**

We are also here as a listening ear if you just need to talk.



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