

FIRST 24 HOURS IN PRISON

INTRODUCTION

The first 24 hours can be the hardest for a new prisoner but hopefully this article will help to guide you through what will happen on his first night. Prison life isn't easy for prisoners, or for their families, and the Jigsaw visitors' centre is here to advise and support both prisoners and their loved ones.



Leaving the Court

The prisoner will be taken from the courts by van, occasionally by car, to HMP Leeds. He will then be handed over to the reception staff who will book him in as a new reception, cataloguing all his personal possessions such as money, jewellery and clothes. He will be asked to verify who he is and then given a unique prison number and an identity card. This number will then become part of his identity whilst he is in prison. Whilst in reception he will be told what property he is/isn't allowed. If he has property with him on arrival that is not permitted it will be stored for him. Any money that he has on his person will be placed into 'prisoners monies' and will be available for him to spend on his first canteen sheet.

The First Night Centre

From reception he will be taken to the 'First Night Centre' on D1 landing. On arrival on D1 he will be seen by a member of staff, usually officer grade. He will be asked a series of questions in order to assess his abilities for adjusting to prison life. It is a basic risk assessment that every new prisoner must go through. On his first night he will be offered a packet of tobacco, £4 phone credit for the pin phone, a pin number and a free prison letter to enable him to contact friends and loved ones. Some basic toiletry items will also be offered to allow him to freshen up.

After having a basic risk assessment he will see the nurse allowing him to discuss any medical problems he has. If he needs to see the doctor for any reason he will have an opportunity to ask the nurse for a doctor's appointment at this stage. The doctor would usually visit him later that evening. All nurse consultations are held in a confidential environment. He will then be given a hot meal, a chance to relax in his cell and be able to make any phone calls.

Waking up in Prison

The following morning he will be seen by a range of agencies that may be able to offer help and guidance through his impending sentence. Those agencies are:

- CARATS (drug and alcohol workers)
- Safer Custody (help with coping strategies)
- Benefits
- Probation
- Education
- Chaplaincy
- Jigsaw Family Support Workers

He will stay on the first night centre for only the first night in prison. During this induction he will have access to information on the prison rules & regulations, general regime & routine, jobs, groups & courses, and also be assessed on his abilities, before being transferred to one of the other permanent wings.

Personal Officers

When he is allocated to a permanent wing he will be assigned a personal officer. His day to day needs can be dealt with by the landing staff, but other concerns will be dealt with by his personal officer. Most wings will usually publish a list of prisoners and their respective personal officer; a personal officer can sometimes be called your case officer or lifer officer. If at any time he transfers to a new wing then a new personal officer from that wing will be assigned to him.

Diversity

HMP Leeds is totally committed to ensuring that all prisoners, staff and visitors are treated fairly and equitably, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnic or national origins, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or disabilities. Good race relations within the establishment are the responsibility of everyone who lives, works and visits at HMP Leeds.

Foreign National Prisoners

If he has been sent to prison and is a foreign national, i.e. a person who was born in a country other than the United Kingdom, and he would like to speak with a solicitor to help him with deportation or removal matters or, he would like to contact members of his family, he can talk to a member of staff or ask to see the Foreign National Liaison Officer. A list of solicitors can be provided to him that may be able to help him, also a number of information notices and booklets are available in various languages, these can be found in the wing prisoner information rooms.

Disability Liaison Officer

He will have the opportunity to declare any disabilities he may feel he has when coming through the reception process, and then again on the first night centre. A note of his condition(s) will be made

and he will be issued with a green card to be kept with him at all times. If special needs are identified then a medical management plan will be agreed with him. If necessary the type of accommodation required will be assessed and an appropriate cell will be allocated.

Complaints

Usually any problems can be resolved by speaking to a wing officer or his personal officer. If an official complaint is necessary forms are freely and easily available on the wings, they are then placed into a sealed box and handled as confidential. The complaints box is emptied daily and only by the request complaints clerk, no other member of staff has access to the box.

I.M.B – Independent Monitoring Board

The independent monitoring board is made up of volunteers, who have an interest in the Criminal Justice System, and act as a watchdog within the prison. Their aim is to ensure that the prison is run correctly and that the prisoners are treated decently. They will get involved in prison issues; they will not get involved with a prisoners personal issues outside the prison. I.M.B is completely independent of the prison and they will speak to prisoners out of the sight and hearing of staff if requested. There are applications, and boxes, on each wing to request to speak to a member of the I.M.B. These boxes are only emptied by I.M.B members.

Sending Money into HMP Leeds

Postal orders are the best way to send in money. They must be made payable to Her Majesty's Prison Service. The prisoner's full name and number must be on the back of the postal order. Anyone sending a postal order must enclose the sender's details.

Issue of Prison Kit

When he first arrives at HMP Leeds he will be issued with prison clothing. Prison issue clothing is compulsory whilst on the standard status. Once he is advanced to the enhanced status he may be permitted to have his own clothing brought in.

Handing Possessions in

Any possessions to be handed in should be applied for by the prisoners on a blue application form (available on his wing). Seven days notice is needed, and one particular date arranged for the items to be delivered. You do not need to be on a visit to deliver possessions to the property office. For more information on property, telephone the property office on 0113 2032770.

Listeners

The Listener scheme is a peer support service with the aim of reducing suicides and self-harm in prisons. The listeners are prisoners trained by the Samaritans, and are covered by the same code of

conduct and confidentiality as the Samaritans. Listeners are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and some listeners are available who can speak other languages. The Samaritans can also be contacted by using the pin phone system at no cost. For more information visit their website [here](https://www.samaritans.org/).

Prison Jargon

- **Convicted:** Someone who has been found guilty/has pleaded guilty and has been sentenced.
- **Remand:** Someone who is awaiting trial
- **Application:** For everything a prisoner wants to do he has to apply for it by filling in an application form. These are generally referred to as 'apps.'
- **Wing:** There are 6 wings in HMP Leeds, A, B, C, D, E, F. Everyone starts off on D wing and then are moved depending on what work or education they are doing.
- **Basic/standard/enhanced:** HMP Leeds runs a privileged scheme. This scheme affects the work the prisoner can do, how many visits they can have each week/month, what personal property they can have and what they can spend on the canteen. All prisoners start off on standard privileges, if they behave well, get on with staff and other prisoners and have a job, they can then apply to become an enhanced prisoner. Usually after 10-12 weeks. However if their behavior is not to the expected standard they can be placed on a basic privilege which means less visits, no personal property, loss of the in cell TV and less money to spend on the canteen.