HMP Brixton

A Visitors’ Guide

This guide includes information that you may find useful for the duration of the time your family or friend is a resident at HMP Brixton.

If you notice anything that is incorrect on this page, please contact us on visitorinfoupdate@prisonadvice.org.uk

Any further information can be found on the prison website at www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/prison-finder/brixton or you can ring the main switchboard on 020 8588 6000.

Address:
HMP Brixton
Jebb Avenue
LONDON
SW2 5XF

Governor: Dave Bamford

Pact Worker contact: brixton@prisonadvice.org.uk

Visitors’ Centre Telephone: 0208 588 6406 – lines are open on Tuesday and Thursday, 07:45-17:00; Saturday, 08:00-17:00; Sunday, 12:45-17:00.

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### Visiting Times:

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* Alternated between A-D Wing and G-Wing

**Booking a visit:**

All visits must be booked in advance. Only those visitors whose details have been listed on the Prisoner’s Authorisation Contact List (as provided by the prisoner) and those whom are named on the booking will be allowed entry into the prison.

Prison staff cannot add visitor(s) to a Prisoner’s Authorisation Contact List without the consent and authorisation of a Prisoner.

Adults and children must all have Identification; for more information regarding Identification, please see **Identification Policy** below.

**To book your visit**

Telephone: 0208 678 1433

The phone line operates on weekdays between 13:15 – 16:15.

Visits can also be booked online: [www.gov.uk/prison-visits](http://www.gov.uk/prison-visits)

You will need:

- the name and date of birth of the person you would like to visit,
- their prison number,
- dates of births for all the visitors coming with you.
At your visit
Visits can be extremely emotional and the process can be confusing. All prisons have differing processes for making visits and also differing security checks.

Security checks
You may be required to have your finger or thumb prints scanned as part of a security check. You may also have an iris scan.

Sometimes you will be sniffed by security dogs. Make sure you wear clothes that are not contaminated by any form of drug as you will be returned to the Visitors’ Centre and will not be able to have your visit. You may also be searched by a prison officer (of the same gender).

During your visit, officers will be with you throughout and will open and lock doors in front of and behind you at all stages.

As a condition of entry to HMP Brixton, all visitors will be searched. Refusal to comply with any search will result in the visitor being refused entry. All visitors will be required to undergo a Level B rub-down search; this may include a search by passive drug dog. Female visitors and children under the age of 16 will only be searched by female staff; male visitors can be searched by either male or female staff.

Identification Policy
For all visits you will need to take secure self-identification e.g. passport, citizen documentation, driving licence and a household bill as proof of address. In most cases you will need two forms of documentation.

If you do not have a passport or driving license you can order a free citizen ID card. The cost of the application to date is £10 for delivery within 21 working days, or £30 for fast track next day delivery. You can find out more at www.citizencard.com.

Staff will accept the following forms of identification:

- passport, including foreign passports and time expired passports where the photograph is still recognisable,
- EC identify card,
- photograph driving license,
- immigration photo card,
- senior citizen's public transport photo pass issued by a local authority,
• employer’s ID card, but only if this clearly shows the name of the visitor and the employer and has a photograph or signature which can be compared with the visitor’s appearance,
• citizen photo card – these are provided free and are available through the Visits Centre on satisfactory evidence of two of the items below.

If you are unable to produce any of the above, then staff will accept two or more of those listed below:

• birth or marriage certificate (if applicable),
• rail or bus pass with photograph,
• bank statement dated within the past three months,
• young person’s ‘proof of age’ card,
• trade union card,
• foreign identity or residents card,
• utility bills – gas, electricity, phone, council tax, water, dated no more than six months previous to the date of visit,
• medical card,
• paper driving license.

Failure to provide an acceptable form of identification may result in entry into the establishment being refused.

Children’s Identification Policy

You must provide one of the following forms of ID for your child:

• passport,
• birth certificate,
• citizen card,
• young persons ‘proof of age’ card.

Dress code

For security, health and safety reasons, some prisons have a specific dress code for visitors and others have a more relaxed policy, making assessments on a case by case basis.

At the time we compiled this information, the dress code at Brixton was as follows:

• Hats may not be worn in the visits hall, with the exception of religious headwear (e.g. Sikh turbans, Jewish yarmulkes, Muslim Kufi, the Hijab
and Rastafarian hats). These will be subject to searching as per HMP Brixton’s searching policy.

- Gloves and scarves **may not** be worn. These should be left in the lockers provided in the visits entrance.
- Hooded tops **may** be worn, but **not** with the hood up.
- Dresses, skirts and shorts **must** reach the knee in the standing position; high cut shorts are **not** permitted.
- Tops **must** be sufficient to cover both breasts and the midriff area and must **not** be transparent. Cleavage **must** be appropriately covered so as not to cause offence. Athletic singlets (vests) are **not** permitted.
- Torn or ripped jeans with **any** holes are **not** allowed.
- Footwear **must** be enclosed. Sandals are appropriate, but flip-flops are **not** permitted.
- Clothing with any logos connected to a sporting team may **not** be worn by visitors who are 13 and over. Clothing displaying offensive patterns or logos will **not** be permitted (such as cannabis leaves, racist logos or offensive language).

If the clothing you are wearing does not meet the above criteria you will be offered an alternative; if you are unwilling to wear the alternative, entry will be refused.

**What can I bring in for my children?**

The following items must be left at the top desk when entering the visits hall:

- a maximum of two babies’ bottles, which **must** be transparent to enable an effective search,
- two nappies,
- baby wipes,
- carry car seats are only permitted for babies under six months and the car seat is subject to a thorough search.

**Food and drink**

There are vending machines and a café in the visiting hall where you can purchase food and drinks. Paper money is not permitted, so make sure you bring coins. There is a maximum limit of £15 per adult.

The only items allowed into the visits hall are:
• essential medication (must be left in the possession of the officer in charge of visits on the day),
• wheelchair or crutches,
• locker key.

If you would like to know more specific information on what you can bring, please contact the prison directly on the details at the top of the page.

Money

You cannot give money to the prisoner during a visit.

HM Brixton offers the service of online, mobile or telephone banking which allows faster, cheaper and more secure payments to prisoner accounts. The money sent using this service should, in most cases, reach prisoner accounts within one working day. Visit: www.gov.uk/send-prisoner-money

To access this service, you will need the prisoner number as well as the prisoner’s date of birth.

Payment reference: (prison number) AND (prisoner’s date of birth) e.g. A1234JG 10/01/1959

Prison Bank Details:
Account Number – 10018743
Sort Code – 60-70-80

Banned items

Do not attempt to bring any of the following into prison during your visit:

• illegal drugs,
• alcohol,
• weapons,
• a camera,
• a mobile phone,
• indecent or obscene material,
• material that threatens the security of the prison,
• material that is written in code.

If you are unsure what you can bring, contact the prison directly.

Rules of the Visiting Hall
It is important to follow these rules at all times because breaking the rules could result in visits being cancelled or stopped early and prisoners receiving red entries. Serious breaches could even result in visiting bans, closed visits and prisoners receiving an adjudication. CCTV is in constant operation.

- Do not behave in any way which disrupts the visits of others.
- Anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Hands must be kept in view at all times.
- Inappropriate kissing or embracing which may be deemed indecent to staff or visitors alike will not be permitted.
- Visitors must leave medical items, nappies and baby wipes at the top desk when entering the visits hall.
- The table is to remain between the visitor and the prisoner at all times.
- Visitors’ seats must remain against the wall.
- Feet must be kept off the tables and your chair on the floor – use all four legs.
- No coats or jumpers are allowed at the back of a chair.
- If you are not wearing an item of clothing, you must hang it up, including children’s coats.
- No hats are permitted to be worn at any time in the visits hall, unless on religious grounds.
- Only three fathers and children are allowed in the children’s play area at any one time.
- Prisoners are to remain seated at all times. If you have any queries please ask staff or the Visits Orderly.
- No prisoners are allowed to walk to the café or vending machines.
- Prisoners may ask their visitor or the Visits Orderly for information on the refreshments available.
- Please kindly remember that your children remain your responsibility at all times.

Can visits be terminated?

Yes, under the following circumstances:

- If a staff member overhears a conversation that may pose a threat to the security or good order and discipline of the establishment.
- If an unauthorized article – that is, any item that has not been authorised by staff – is passed.
• If inappropriate behaviour continues, the visit will be terminated and the reason for the termination recorded in the visits log.

• Where behaviour is totally unacceptable or it is believed that the security of the establishment has been compromised, the visit must cease immediately.

• Where it is believed that an illicit item has been passed, the Officer in charge of visits must remove the prisoner immediately and conduct a full search. The visitor should be removed from the visits hall and either detained until the police arrive or escorted from the establishment.

**What constitutes ‘inappropriate behaviour’?**

Inappropriate behaviour is defined as any behaviour that may present a risk to the security of the establishment, or behaviour that is deemed indecent. All visitors and prisoners need to be aware that inappropriate physical interaction is prohibited and, in some cases, is a criminal act.

**Closed Visits and the banning of visitors**

Prisoners subject to Closed Visits will be reviewed on a monthly basis by Security and the restrictions may be extended or reduced after taking into consideration intelligence. The Head of Security or Operations may ban any visitor who is found to be involved in smuggling prohibited items or engaging in inappropriate behaviour. The ban will usually be in force for three months, at which point it will be then be subject to a review.

Visitors may appeal by putting any representations in writing to the Governor. Where this poses difficulty, visitors may gain assistance in the Visitors Centre. Where the behaviour of a visitor is considered to have posed a significant risk to the security and good order of the establishment or staff, visitors or prisoners in the visit area, a ban will be considered.

In all cases where a ban is imposed, a letter will be sent to the visitor and a copy placed on the prisoners Security file.

**Financial Assistance for Visits**

If you are on a low income or receive benefits you may be entitled to financial assistance for the cost of visiting your relative in prison. Help is
provided by the Assisted Prison Visits Unit (APVU). For more information, visit www.gov.uk/staying-in-touch-with-someone-in-prison

Keeping in touch

Phone
To speak to a prisoner on the phone, the prisoner has to call you using a prison phone.

Prison staff can listen to and record most types of call. Some calls aren’t monitored, for example when a prisoner calls a legal adviser.

Letters
Letters to prisoners should be addressed to:

HMP Brixton
Jebb Avenue
LONDON
SW2 5XF

(Prisoners name and prison number)

You must write your own name and address on the back of the envelope or it will not be delivered to the prisoner.

If you do not know the prisoners’ prison number, please address the envelope as above with the prisoner’s date of birth next to his name.

Email

Brixton uses a service called Email a Prisoner, which can be accessed at emailaprisoner.com.

Through this service, family and friends can send a message which is printed out and delivered by prison staff by hand. Once you have signed up, you will receive an activation link via email which you must click on in order to activate your account and send a message. You must buy a minimum of £5 credit in order to use the service, which runs at a cost of 40p per email and at no charge to the recipient.

Voicemail

Family members and friends can sign up to Prison Voicemail at prisonvoicemail.com, a service which allows social contacts to exchange voicemails with prisoners.
On signing up, you will be given a unique local landline number you can call at any time to leave a message; this message will be instantly available for your loved one to listen to. Prisoners can check their messages by dialling the same unique number from any phone in the prison and may leave a reply. When the message has been heard, the family member receives an instant text notification, signalling they may leave another message.

In order to access messages, the prisoner pays the cost of a landline call, but the cost of the service itself is paid by the family or friend. Plans start from £5 per month.

**Sending Property to a Prisoner**

All parcels or hand-ins must be authorised via an application to reception which can be made via your imprisoned loved one. They will be allowed an initial clothing parcel fifty six days from the date of sentencing. Prisoners may then apply to be considered for an additional parcel twelve calendar months from their last parcel. Should there be any additional items within the package, they will be returned to the sender and nothing will be passed on to the prisoner.

Unfortunately, items brought in without a signed application will not be accepted. All prisoners are able to buy items they want and need through the approved suppliers, whose catalogues are available in the prison.