Visits Policy

February 2018

Governor Dave Bamford
## Contents

1. Policy Statement 3  
2. Social Visits Information 5  
   2.1 Visiting Times 5  
   2.2 Booking Social Visits 6  
   2.3 Visiting Orders 6  
   2.4 Adding a Visitor to a Prisoner’s account 6  
   2.5 Receiving a Visit 6  
   2.6 Facilities 7  
   2.7 Visitors with Special Needs 7  
   2.8 Children 7  
3. Official Visits Information 7  
4. Items allowed into the Visits Hall 8  
   4.1 Conveyance of Illicit Articles 9  
   4.2 CCTV 10  
   4.3 Prisoner’s Property 10  
5. Entry and Searching Procedures 10  
   5.1 Booking in process 9  
   5.2 Identification 11  
   5.3 Searching of Visitors 11  
   5.4 Passive Drug Dog Indications 12  
   5.5 Searching of Children 12  
   5.6 Searching of Religious or Cultural Headwear 13  
   5.7 Searching of Prisoners 13  
   5.8 Area Searching 13  
6. Exit Procedures 14  
   6.1 Visitor Exit Procedures 14  
   6.2 Prisoner Exit Procedures 14  
7. Behaviour on Visits 15  
8. Dress Code 16  
9. Closed Visits 16  
10. Banning of Visitors 17  
11. Visits Staff 18  
12. Child Protection Measures 18  
13. Assisted Prison Visits 19  
14. Types of Visits 20  
   14.1 Family Visits 20  
   14.2 Family Link Visits 20  
   14.3 Compassionate Visits 20  
   14.4 Accumulated Visits 20  
   14.5 Inter-Prison Visits 21  
15. Smoking Policy 21  
16. Medical Assistance 21  
17. Complaints and General Requests 22
1. Policy Statement

We would like to ensure that when visiting HMP Brixton all visitors, both professional and social have a positive experience and we endeavour to make this as easy as possible. It is our primary objective to promote good relations between all visitors and the establishment whilst maintaining a safe and decent environment.

Purpose

The purpose of this Visits Policy is to:

- Provide prisoners with the opportunity to maintain contact with friends, family and legal / professional advisors
- Contribute to the maintenance of good order
- Contribute to the improvement in relationships between staff, prisoners and their families.
- Ensure there is a balance between providing quality visits in a relaxed environment, the maintenance of good order and the maintenance of security requirements including the prevention of escapes and trafficking of illicit articles.
- Support the Children and Families Resettlement Pathway

Aim

- To outline the procedures for social and professional visitors to HMP Brixton
- To provide a decent and conducive environment for visits to take place whilst maintaining the appropriate level of security for the establishment.
- To deliver and manage a visiting service in accordance with PSI 16/2011 and Visits Booking, Conduct Visits and Service for Visitors specification.
- To ensure that the minority of prisoners who abuse the visits system to gain access to illicit articles are managed robustly and appropriately.

Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

The Prison Service is opposed to any form of discrimination or harassment, whether direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious, on grounds of ethnic origin, religious belief, sex, sexual orientation, disability or other irrelevant factor. Insulting, abusive
or derogatory language will not be tolerated. Any form of harassment or unfair discrimination will be regarded as a serious disciplinary offence.

**Health and Safety Policy Statement**

HMP Brixton is fully committed to the development of a positive and proactive health and safety culture throughout the establishment. We constantly work to ensure working environment for all Staff, Prisoners, Contractors and Visitors by compliance with the following Acts and regulations:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Managing of Health and safety at Work Regulations 1999
- PSO 3801 Health and Safety Policy Statement

**Violence Reduction Policy Statement**

The definition of violence for Her Majesty's Prison Service is as follows:

‘*Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened, or assaulted. This includes an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health. The resulting harm may be physical, emotional or psychological.*’

HMP Brixton is committed to reducing all forms of violence. We will constructively and consistently challenge violent behaviour of any kind and promote a safe, decent environment, aiming to give all those who live and work here an opportunity to live in an embedded, non-violent culture.

Everyone at HMP Brixton has the right to live, work and develop in safety, free from fear of abuse, harm or oppression. All prisoners, staff and visitors will be expected to behave in a manner, which is fair, polite, respectful, non-violent and considerate of other’s diversity.

*Her Majesty’s` Prison Service operates a zero tolerance to any kind of violence.*
2. Social Visits Information

Social visits take place in the main visits hall which can accommodate up to 20 visits of up to 3 adults and 3 children per prisoner, unless otherwise agreed by the Visits Manager.

Seating is arranged to promote family ties whilst enabling appropriate levels of supervision. The seating plan is written prior to the start of visits and prisoners are positioned on a random basis, although efforts will be made to place those with young children in the close vicinity of the play area.

2.1 Visiting Times

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Mon</th>
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<th>Saturday</th>
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<tr>
<td>08.30 – 09.30</td>
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<td>A-D Wing</td>
<td>09.00 – 10.00</td>
<td>A-D Wing (Enhanced only)</td>
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<td>10.15 – 11.15</td>
<td>A-D Wing</td>
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<td>A-D Wing</td>
<td>10.45 – 11.45</td>
<td>A-D Wing (Enhanced Only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.00 – 17.00</td>
<td>A-D Wing</td>
<td>G-Wing</td>
<td>G-Wing</td>
<td>Wing Double Visit (2 VOs)</td>
<td>15.45 – 16.45</td>
<td>G-Wing</td>
<td>Enhanced Extended Visit (1 VO)***</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.00 – 19.00</td>
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<td>Enhanced Evening Visit**</td>
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*G wing the first Tuesday of each month this will be a double visit from 14.15-16.15 (Two VOS to be deducted)

**Thursday Enhanced evening visit 18.00-19.00 alternated between G-wing & A-D Wing (Starting with G wing on Thursday 22nd of February 2018). On A-D Wing evening visits, a homework club will also be running. Ask for homework club when booking by phone.

***Sunday 08.30-09.30 G wing Enhanced only & Sunday 10.45-11.45 A-D wing Enhanced only/ every 3rd Sunday of the month G-wing Enhanced extended visit 14.15-16.30 (one VO to be deducted)
2.2 Booking social visits
All social visits must be pre-booked via the following options:
Visits Booking line – 0208 678 1433 (open Mon – Fri 13:15hrs – 16:15hrs for social visits)
Online Booking – www.gov.uk/prison-visits

Visits can be booked up to 28 days in advance but all visits need be booked one clear working day in advance. Providing a visitor is on the prisoner’s approved visitor list they can contact the booking line with the prisoner’s prison number and book a visit. HMP Brixton will only allow visits from those who have been approved and listed on our system.

2.3 Visiting Orders
Visits entitlement is outlined in PSI 16/2011, which is available in the prison library or on the internet via the Prison service website. Prisoners can send their Visiting Order (VO’s) out two weeks prior to the date that their visit is permitted to take place.

All Serving Prisoners are entitled to 1 statutory visiting order every 14 days. These V.O’s are valid for 28 days from the date of issue. If they expire and have not been used, they can be re-issued, once the expiry date has passed within. These V.O’s however will not regenerate after 12 months from issue if not used.

The length and amount of visits are determined by the prisoner’s Incentive and Earned Privileges (I.E.P) level:
- Basic level – No additional V.Os
- Standard level – No additional V.Os
- Enhanced level – 2 additional V.Os per 28 days and Sunday visits times available

All visits will last for at least one hour. Visiting Orders from other establishments will be transferred from their sending establishment.

2.4 Adding a Visitor to a Prisoner’s account
All new inductions will be given a visitor approval form to complete. Existing prisoners will need to use a visitor amendment form to change or add visitors to their visit account. Residential staff will update this information on P-NOMIS.

2.5 Receiving a Visit
Prisoners will receive a slip advising them of their booked visit the evening before the date of the visit.

Prisoners who have a visit must:
- Remain on the residential unit until permitted to leave for their visit at movement or when staff come to collect them.
- Ensure that no items are taken to visits unless an application has previously been authorised. Any smoking requisites found will be confiscated
- Be appropriately dressed for visits (see dress code below).
2.6 Facilities
Refreshments are available in the Visits Hall from the Bad Boys Bakery and vending machines. A visitors’ toilets and baby changing facility are available.

There is a family-friendly Visitor’s Centre run by PACT, a national charity. Visitors are offered a warm welcome, information and support. For more information please go to https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/. The Visitors Centre will be open during all visits sessions. The Visitors Centre provides a toilet, baby changing facilities, lockers and a hot drinks machine.

2.7 Visitors with Special Needs
Visitors may request the use of the disabled parking bay. This can be requested at the time of booking so that a reservation can be made by the gate staff.

A disabled badge must be clearly displayed at all times and gate staff informed to secure entry to the car park. Guide dogs and hearing dogs are permitted entry into the visits hall. Visitors must provide official documentation prior to the first visit, including a photograph of the dog. The gate will retain a record of all approved guide and hearing dogs. The visits room is located on the ground floor and disabled toilet facilities are available.

2.8 Children
Children who attend visits are the responsibility of the parent/carer. Parents/carers should ensure that the children they are responsible for are behaving appropriately at all times.

The visits area has a children’s play area which is staffed most of the time by a PACT play worker. Children should not be left unattended in the play area when no play worker is on duty and prisoners are not permitted access into the play area.

3. Official Visits Information
Visits, other than domestic, are managed via professional and legal visiting arrangements. All such visits will be undertaken within sight, but out of hearing of prison staff. The following can take advantage of the legal visits privilege:

- Solicitors and barristers
- Probation officers
- Social workers
- NHS (normally link to a solicitor for reports)
- CRC
- St Giles
- St Mungos

Any other charities or organisations must write to us asking permission and stating who in the prison is sponsoring them. We will then look at three choices:
- They can have legal visits
- They can have a legal visit if they are accompanied by a member of staff from the area that sponsors them
- They cannot have a legal visit

You may write a letter to the head of security or the visits booking clerk will forward your written request by email to the security department for consideration.

Professional visitors must report directly to the gate where the gate staff will book them in and inform the Legal Visits staff of their arrival before letting them into the prison.

Legal and professional visitors are subject to being searched when entering the establishment (level B rub down search), which is inclusive of bags and any other carried items, which must be kept to a minimum.

If police or legal advisers wish to use recording equipment/TV/DVD Player/Laptop/DVD's then this must be formally requested when booking the visit. HMP Brixton does not provide this equipment.

**Professional/Legal Visits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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<td>08.30 – 09.30</td>
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<td>A-D Wing</td>
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<td>A-D Wing</td>
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**Booking an official visit**
Visits Booking Line – 0208 588 6132 (open Mon-Fri 08:30hrs – 16:30hrs official visits only)
By email – legalvisits.brixton@hmpps.gsi.gov.uk or legvis@hmpps.gsi.gov.uk

**4. Items allowed into the Visits Hall**

HMP Brixton has stringent security measures in place to impede the entry of any prohibition items including Drugs and Mobile Phones. Bringing these items in is detrimental to the good order of the establishment and also increases risk of harm to staff, prisoners and visitors.

Items of personal property must be placed in the lockers provided. The only items that will be allowed into the visits hall are:
• A maximum of 2 babies bottles may be taken into the visits hall. All bottles must be transparent to enable an effective search.
• Nappies and Baby Wipes but these must be left at the top desk.
• Maximum £20 per adult of coins – **paper money is not permitted**
• Essential medication that must be left in the possession of the I/C in charge of visits on the day
• Wheelchair or crutches
• Locker key
• In the case of legal advisers, documentation necessary to conduct the visit
• Any clothing items removed during the visit e.g. jackets or jumpers must be hung up on the hooks provided.

All buggies and Push Chairs should be left in the visitors centre.

**4.1 Conveyance of Illicit Articles**

It is a criminal offence under the Prison Act for certain items to be used, brought into, possessed within or taken out of prisons.

It is a **criminal offence** for any person without authority to bring or throw any of the following prohibited/unauthorised items in or out of a prison or to cause another person to do so, to leave any prohibited/unauthorised items in any place (in or out of the prison) intending it to come into the possession of a prisoner or to give a prisoner any of the following items:

**THESE ITEMS SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT INTO THE ESTABLISHMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List A</th>
<th>List B</th>
<th>List C</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controlled drugs</td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>Tobacco</td>
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<td>Explosives</td>
<td>Mobile Telephone</td>
<td>Money</td>
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<td>Firearms</td>
<td>Mobile phone charger</td>
<td>Clothing</td>
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<td>Ammunition</td>
<td>Camera</td>
<td>Food</td>
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<td>Offensive Weapons</td>
<td>Cassette Player</td>
<td>Drink</td>
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<td>Dictaphones</td>
<td>Letters</td>
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<td>Camcorders</td>
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<td>Sim Cards</td>
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<td>Tools</td>
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<td>Laptops and other IT</td>
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This list does not represent an exhaustive list

**List A Items:** The maximum penalty on conviction for committing offences in respect of list A items is 10 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

**List B Items:** The maximum penalty on conviction for committing offences in respect of list B items is 2 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. All such offences attract a criminal record on conviction.
**List C Items:** Offences relating to list C items are subject to a maximum penalty of a level 3 fine (currently £1000). All such offences carry a criminal record on conviction.

Please note that should anyone be caught trafficking illicit items during a visit which includes children social services will be informed.

**4.2 CCTV**
The visits hall is constantly monitored by CCTV. Should any illegal activity take place, this CCTV footage may be used as evidence.

**4.3 Prisoner’s Property**
Property for prisoners cannot be handed in on visits unless there has been prior authorisation from the Visits Custodial Manager or Governor in line with national and local property policies.

Prisoners who wish to hand out items of stored property to visitors may do so by application which must be signed by a manager.

**5. Entry and Searching Procedures**

**5.1 Booking in process**
All social visitors will book in at the Visits Centre. The visitors for one prisoner must book in together, latecomers will not be able to join the other visitors. All male adult visitors will be subject to biometrics entry system and will be asked to wear a coloured wrist band.

Late visitors will **not be permitted entry in the final 30 minutes** of the visit time.

Should a visitor display signs of either alcohol or drug use they will not be permitted to enter the establishment.

**5.2 Identification**
All visitors, **including children and babies** must be able to provide a valid means of identification to the visitors centre staff when attending for the purpose of visiting.

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**ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF IDENTIFICATION**

Visitor must identify themselves using ONE of the following:

- Passport, including foreign passports and time expired passports where the photograph is still recognisable
- EC identify card
- Photograph Driving License
- Immigration Photo Card
- Senior Citizens public transport passé issued by Local Authority
- Employers 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
visitors appearance
• Citizen Photocard. 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 within the past 3 months
• Young Person’s ‘Proof of Age’ card
• Trade Union Card
• Foreign Identity or Residents Card
• Utility bills – Gas, Electricity, Phone, Council Tax, Water, within the past 6
months
• Medical Card
• Paper Driving License

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

Identification - Professional and Legal Visitors

All visitors will be named on the visits list to confirm they have a visit booked.
Visitors will have an official identification badge incorporating a photograph. In the
case of Legal Visitors, all visitors must provide a letter of introduction from their legal
practice. Photographic evidence must be produced to provide confirmation that the
visitor is the person named on the letter of introduction.

In all cases where staff are unable to satisfy themselves that the necessary level of
identification has been met, the matter must be referred to the Orderly Officer.

5.3 Searching of Visitors
As a condition of entry all visitors will be searched. Refusal to comply with any
search will result in the visitor being refused entry. All searching will be conducted in
accordance with the Local Security Strategy.

All visitors must remove their coats and all personal items and place them in a locker
in the visits centre prior to entering the searching area.

All visitors will be required to undergo a minimum Level B rub-down search. Female
visitors will only be searched by female staff, children under the age of 16 by female
staff; male visitors can be searched by either male or female staff.
All searching will be undertaken in a sensitive and non-intrusive manner, but commensurate with the need to prevent illicit items entering the establishment and meet the requirements of the National Security Framework (NSF).

All visitors will pass through a metal detecting portal and all indications will be interrogated using the hand held metal detecting wand. Searching staff must ensure that they conduct the search in a sensitive manner as possible without compromising the security of the establishment.

On arrival at the visits area, visitors may be required to submit to a search by passive drug search dogs. The Officer Dog Handler will be in control of the search dog at all times and, as the name suggests, the search dog will be encouraged to search each visitor, which may include the dog standing on its rear legs to search the visitor’s upper body. Visitors are requested to comply with the requests of the Officer Dog Handler in order to ensure comprehensive searching and speedy completion in order to maximise visiting time. Refusal to be searched by the passive drug dog will result in entry being refused.

5.4 Passive Drug Dog Indications

If a visitor has been in contact with, or is in possession of an illegal substance the dog will indicate this to the handler. A positive indication by the passive drug dog will result in the visitor being requested to provide an explanation how they may have been exposed to controlled drugs. If an illegal substance is found it will be confiscated and placed in an evidence bag according to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. The Police will be called and the visitor will be held voluntarily awaiting their arrival. If the visitor refuses they will be held using the powers of arrest to detain them until they handed over to the police.

If the drug dog indicates on a visitor they will be subject to a level A rub down search, offered a closed visit or refused entry. Consideration will be given by the Head of Operations as to whether the visitor should be banned. Prison drug dogs are entitled to the same consideration as prison staff themselves. Any abuse of prison drug dogs will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as abuse of prison staff.

Where a visitor has been made the subject of a target search, the name of the person requesting the search must be recorded. Visits search staff must count in all visitors and differentiate between the number of adult and child visitors and entered into the search log.

5.5 Searching of Children

Babies will be searched in line with the Local Security Strategy. The definition of a baby will usually refer to any child who wears a nappy, however consideration will need to be given to the maturity of the child. In all cases a search will only be carried out with the permission of the child’s carer.
Children under the age of 16 will be searched by a female member of staff. All searching staff must be aware of any restriction for searching religious or cultural headwear; this is outlined in the Local Security Strategy.

Any prohibited items found during a search must be dealt with in line with preservation of evidence techniques and the Local Security Strategy.

Once the search procedure has been completed, all visitors will be allowed access to the visits room to sit at their allocated tables.

**5.6 Searching of Religious or Cultural Headwear**

All persons can have their religious headwear searched by a hand held metal detector. Such headwear is subject to searching but care must be taken to treat it with respect at all times. The request for the removal of headwear should only happen if there is an alarm which cannot be accounted for, or if there is suspicion of concealed items, this must be done in private and by staff of the same gender.

Staff should not attempt to unwind or remove headgear. The person must be given the opportunity to remove or unwind it themselves. Following the removal of headwear the person must be given the opportunity to use a mirror and to have privacy and time to put it back on.

Some female visitors, particularly those of the Muslim faith, will wear veils or other face coverings. For religious reasons they must not be made to uncover their faces in public or in front of a man as this could cause serious offence and distress. When required for identification purposes the removal of the veil or face covering must be done in private with only female staff present.

**5.7 Entry procedures and searching of Prisoners**

All prisoners will be searched in accordance with the Local Security Strategy and their identity visually verified using an ID card or biometrics system.

- On entry to visits 1 in 5 prisoners will be receive a Level B rubdown search
- On exit from visits all prisoners will receive a Level A rubdown search
- On exit from visits a minimum of one prisoner per day will be subject to a random full search. This will be logged on the visits daily log.
- Additional intelligence led-full searches will be conducted and on the basis of suspicion.

**5.8 Area Searching**

All visits areas, including the male, female and disabled toilets will be searched by staff before and after each visits session. The daily visits log will be signed when this is completed.
6. Exit Procedures

6.1 Visitor Exit Procedures

All visitors will be held in the visits hall until all prisoners have left the hall and the Officer in charge has confirmed that the roll is correct.

All adult male visitors will be checked against the biometric system or wristbands, if the biometrics are not working. Search visits OSG’s must satisfy themselves that the same number of adult and child visitors are leaving the establishment as entered.

Visits will be terminated if:

- A staff member overhears a conversation that may pose a threat to the security or good order/discipline of the establishment
- An unauthorized article is passed. The definition of this is any item that has not been authorised by staff.

If inappropriate behaviour continues the visit must 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.

6.2 Prisoner Exit Procedures

All prisoners must leave the hall at the end of the visit and have their identity checked via the biometric system or ID card. The officer in charge will reconcile the roll and confirm that this is correct. Once this has been proved correct, the Gate officer will be authorised to let all visitors out of the visits hall.

Once all visitors have left the room and the roll has been reconciled, then the staff will release prisoners from waiting area. This will be done under the direct instruction of the officer in charge in charge of visits and will be carried out in such a way as to allow proper search procedures to be adhered to and the correct amount of full searches to be conducted.
7. **Behaviour on Visits**

*Please ensure you follow these rules at all times.*

*Breaking the rules could result in visits being cancelled or stopped early and prisoners receiving negative IEP entries.*

*Serious breaches could result in visiting bans, closed visits and prisoners receiving an adjudication.*

- Do not behave in any way which disrupts the visits of others. Anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated.

- Keep your hands in view at all times.

  *No inappropriate or prolonged kissing or embracing which may be deemed indecent to staff or visitors alike. No hands inside clothing or touching intimate areas.*

- Visitors must leave medical items, nappies and baby wipes at the top desk when entering the visits hall.

- The table it to remain between the visitor and the prisoner at all times.

  *VISITOR’S SEATS MUST REMAIN AGAINST THE WALL.*

- Keep your feet off of the tables and your chair on the floor. Use all four legs.

- No coats or jumpers are allowed at the back of a chair. (visitor or prisoner) If you’re not wearing it, hang it up, no hats unless religious to be worn at ANY time in the visits hall.

- No prisoners are allowed in the kids play area at any time.

- Prisoners to remain seated at all times, any queries please ask staff.

  - Lids provided to remain on hot drinks at all times.

- Unless the visit is over 1 hour long, *prisoners are not permitted use of the toilet facilities during the visit.* Medical needs will be taken into consideration and prisoners will be offered use of the toilet prior to the visit commencing.

- No prisoners are allowed to walk to the café or vending machines

- CLOSED VISIT PRISONERS are allowed drinks items bought from the vending machine ONLY. They are not allowed ANY food items from BBB café or the vending machine.

  - Prisoners must clear their tables at the end of the visit.

*Please remember that your children remain your responsibility at all times.*

*Please look out for them and ensure they do not disturb the visits of others.*
8. Dress Code

To maintain decency in the visits hall our dress code must be adhered to. This is to prevent inappropriate clothing being worn in and around the presence of other visitors and staff.

**Visitors - Please see the information below as guidance.**

- **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/scarves** - may not be worn. These should be left in the lockers provided in the visits entrance.
- **Hooded tops** - can be worn but not with the hood up.
- **Skirts/Dresses** – skirts and dresses must at least reach the knee in the standing position unless worn with leggings.
- **Shorts** - 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.
- **Footwear** - footwear should be enclosed - sandals are appropriate but flip flops are not permitted. No lace up boots above the ankle are permitted.
- **Logos** - 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).
- **No transparent clothing is permitted**

*Visitors not appropriately dressed will be refused entry into the establishment.*

**Prisoners – If not dressed appropriately you may be refused entry to the visits hall**

- Prisoners must look clean and tidy when attending visits
- All prisoners must wear the visits armband as instructed. This must be visible at all times.
- Trousers/Jeans must be worn on the waist and not around the hips. No shorts allowed.
- T-shirts and shirts should be tucked in. No vests permitted.
- No hooded tops or outside jackets are permitted.
- No zip up tops permitted
- No hats, with the exception of religious headwear.
- Shoe laces must be done up properly.
• Prisoners working in visits must wear their allocated uniforms and are not permitted to wear their own clothing.

9. Closed Visits

Closed visits may be imposed on both visitors and prisoners. Closed visits are used at HMP Brixton as a preventative measure to ensure the safety of staff, prisoners and visitors and to keep the good order and discipline in the establishment.

Closed visits will apply to any prisoner or visitor in the following circumstances:
• Where there is sufficient intelligence to suggest that a prisoner is involved in the drug/mobile phone culture at HMP Brixton
• To any visitor who attempts to smuggle into the establishment any controlled drug
• If a visitor attempts to pass on to a prisoner during visits any prohibited item
• Closed visits can be applied where the behavior of the prisoner, the visitor or both is deemed to be inappropriate or offensive.
• If any visitor or prisoner uses any type of threatening, abusive or intimidating behavior towards staff, visitors or prisoners.
• If a visitor is observed by staff on visits or the CCTV attempting to pass any prohibited items.
• If a prisoner is observed by staff on visits or on prison CCTV accepting or trying to conceal any prohibited item
• If a passive drug dog indicates that a visitor is in possession of drugs
• Following a positive MDT result or MDT refusal visits status will be reviewed in line with the Reduction Supply Strategy

The establishment may also impose a ban on any visitors engaged in the above activities.

Those 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.

Those who would like to appeal a closed visit’s decision should do so in writing to the Head of Security.

10. Banning of Visitors

The Head of Security or Operations may ban any visitor who is found to be involved in smuggling prohibited items or inappropriate behaviour. The ban will usually be in force for 3 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. The letter will outline:

- The reasons for the ban
- The length of the ban
- Avenue of appeal
- All appeals will be considered on an individual basis

11. Visits Staff

Prison staff will be patrolling the visits room at all times. Such observations will not be intrusive but vigilance will be maintained to ensure that security considerations are maintained.

CCTV is in operation within the visits area. This is undertaken in order to ensure that acceptable conduct is observed and to promote security and a decent environment. CCTV arrangements are subject to and compliant with Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA). CCTV will randomly monitor all areas of the visits hall, including all tables, and record these images.

Should an instance of a breach of security become evident, staff will intervene and the visit may be terminated. Otherwise, staff will respect privacy as far as is possible whilst patrolling with vigilance.

During visits all staff will:
- Ensure that visits are facilitated promptly and that any delays are communicated fully to visitors and prisoners
- Patrol the area ensuring that they remain sensitive to the need for privacy on the part of visitors
- Be courteous to all visitors and prisoners and advise on queries they may have
- Ensure that language and behaviour is professional and appropriate
- Ensure that all prisoners and visitors are acting in an appropriate manner
- Conduct all searches in line with local procedures

12. Child Protection Measures

Prisoners who are subject to restrictions under PSI 16/2011 will only receive visits from children who have been approved.

A child means anyone under 18 years old
A safeguarding children visits register and photographs are held in the visits office, this is updated weekly by the visits I/C in collaboration with the Offender Management Unit. It contains the names of prisoners who are subject to risk to children procedures and names any children who have been approved to visit them.

1. The Visits I/C will ensure that the visits list is checked prior to the start of visits and will brief all staff.

2. The visits search OSG is to check that no unauthorized children are allowed entry into the main visits hall.

3. The Visits staff will ensure that all prisoners who are subject to safeguarding children procedures are seated where they are able to be easily monitored and that they do not have contact with any other child other than those approved to visit them.

Any prisoner who is charged or has a current or previous conviction against a child and requests contact with children will come under child protection measures.

These offences include

- Violence against a child
- Sexual offences against a child
- Neglect or abuse against a child

Once a prisoner has been identified that he falls into this category then child protection measures apply.

To have a child visit advice must be sort from:

- The parent / carer
- Police
- Social services
- Probation

It may take a few weeks to get gain advice; no visit with children will take place until full approval has been received.

13. Assisted Prison Visits

For visitors to prisoners who may require financial assistance in order to fund travel arrangements to visit, there is the possibility of such assistance from the above body. Details of this are available from within the Visitors’ Centre.

Assisted Prison Visits Unit (APVU)
PO Box 2152
14. Types of Visit

14.1 Family Visits

These visits give prisoners the opportunity to spend valuable time playing and talking with their children in a relaxed atmosphere. The visits are held in the visits room, where prisoners are free to move around and enjoy the games and activities on offer with their children. Entertainment is provided.

The dates should be displayed, or available from staff on your residential unit. HMP Brixton endeavours to host a minimum of four family visits per year. Applications must be submitted to the Visits Custodial Manager when advertised. These visits are an extra visit and are not part of the normal visits allocation.

All applications for Enhanced Family Visits will be subject to a robust risk assessment.

14.2 Family Link Visits

These visits primarily allow prisoners to bond with new-born babies or children with disabilities in a less busy environment. These visits must be organized through Spurgeons who supervise these visits. Please ask at the Visitor’s Centre for more information.

14.3 Compassionate Visits

There may be occasions where through extenuating domestic reasons (i.e. bereavement in the family); a prisoner requires an extra visit additional to their existing entitlement. In these cases an application must be made on a ‘General Application’ for a Governor’s approval. Once this visit has been approved the signed application will forwarded to Admin Support for processing.

14.4 Accumulated Visits

All prisoners are entitled to apply for accumulated visits at a prison close to their home area. Applications should be made via your residential unit to the Head of OMU who will initiate the arrangements for the appropriate transfer if accepted.
The criteria for accumulated visits are as follows:

- The requesting prisoner must not have had any visits in the last 6 months
- He must have had a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 26 visiting orders accumulated which must be issued prior to transfer
- Prisoners on the scheme must adhere to all local policies, rules and regulations. Failure to do will result in returning to the parent establishment immediately
- The sending prison must take the prisoner back at the 28 day point

Due to the limited visits capacity in HMP Brixton, we do not have the means to facilitate accumulated visits. Any request for accumulated visits in HMP Brixton will be forwarded to a nearby Category B local prison by OMU.

**14.5 Inter Prison Visits**

Prisoners may also apply to be escorted to another establishment where a partner or family member may be serving a custodial sentence in order to facilitate visiting that person.

The criteria for inter-prison visits are as follows:

- Both prisoners must be in custody for a minimum of 3 months to assess custodial behaviour
- Both prisoners will use a visiting order for the purpose of the visit
- Both prisons must agree to the visit
- If one of the prisoners is a young adult and the other an adult, then the young adult will travel to the adult prison and be located appropriately
- The escort will only take place if staffing and the risk assessment allows
- The visit will take place in the visits room
- The escorting staff will supervise the visit
- Application via Governors application

**15. Smoking Policy**

HMP Brixton operates a ‘no smoking’ policy which includes the visits room and Visitors’ Centre. Unfortunately, visits may not be suspended to provide smoking breaks. Under no circumstances will smoking requisites be permitted into the visits room. If discovered in the search area, visitors will be required to remove them from the establishment prior to the commencement of the visit.

**16. Medical Assistance**

With the exception of life-threatening situations, establishment Healthcare staff are not permitted to provide assistance to visitors or staff. Please bear in mind that such
staff are insured only to treat prisoners detained within the establishment and must adhere to their codes of professional conduct.

17. Complaints and General Requests

Informal Procedure for Visitors: Please speak to the Visits I/C or any member of the visits staff who can hopefully resolve any concerns. Alternatively, speak with the staff in the Visitors centre.

Formal Procedure for Visitors: You may do this in writing to:
- The Governor
- The Head of Operations
- Chair of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB)

The address is: HMP Brixton, Jebb Avenue, SW2 5XF

Prisoners should raise any complaints they may have with the visits staff in the first instance. Where it is not possible for the matter to be dealt with, the Visits I/C will advise in relation to any planned follow up action. Where no response has been received or the matter is considered to need urgent attention, a request complaint form should be submitted.