

Civil prisoners

Civil prisoners are people who are sent to prison for things like

- not paying maintenance money to look after their children
- not paying money called fines or debts
- not paying money they agreed to pay if someone they know was on bail and did not turn up at court
- not doing what the court has told them to do.

Civil prisoners are mostly treated the same as convicted prisoners. But there are some differences. For example, if you are a civil prisoner

- You have the same rights to visits, letters and phone calls as unconvicted prisoners. **See page 40.**
- You do not have to mix with other prisoners if you do not want to.
- You can wear your own clothes. If you do not have enough clothes you can ask prison staff for some.
- You may be allowed to vote if you have been sent to prison for contempt of court or for not paying a fine. There is more information in **Prison Service Order 4650**. There is a copy in the library.

Other things about being a civil prisoner

Being released early from prison

- It may not be possible for you to be released early from prison depending on the reason the court sent you there. You may even have to serve the whole of your sentence. Prison staff will look at this when they work out the date you will be released.
- Ask your personal officer, another prison officer or probation staff for help if
 - you are not sure if you can be released early
 - you think you should be released early but prison staff have not taken this into account when working out the date you will be released.

Appealing against being sent to prison for contempt of court

- Contempt of court means not doing what the court told you to do. You can appeal if you were sent to prison for contempt of court. To appeal means to try to change the decision that the court made.
- You should speak to the legal services officer in prison first to get some advice about how to do this.

If you were sent to prison by a Magistrates' Court

- Appeal to the Crown Court or ask your solicitor to do this within 21 days of getting your sentence.

If you were sent to prison by a Crown Court or County Court

- Appeal to the Civil Appeal Court or ask your solicitor to do this within 14 days of getting your sentence. The address to send your appeal to is

Civil Appeal Court
Royal Courts of Justice
Strand
London
WC2N 2LL