

more than just surviving...

The Criminal Justice System

a guide for families and carers



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More than just surviving the criminal justice system

NEPACS is a regional charity which aims to build bridges between prisoners, their families and the community. It runs prison visitors' centres and tea bars, organises play sessions for prisoners' children, provides free caravan holidays for families and administers hardship grants. NEPACS staff and volunteers can provide friendship and support for families during this difficult time.



We strive to provide a free, accessible and confidential support and information service.

Please get in touch with us on 0191 376 4138.

Information for HMP YOI Low Newton



When am I entitled to visit?

Reception Visit

A reception visit is permitted within the first 7 days of being taken into custody. It does not have to be booked and it lasts a minimum of 30 minutes.

All Other Visits

If you wish to visit an inmate at any other time, you **MUST** book the visit by telephone 48 hours in advance.

How do I book a visit?

Telephone 0191 3764147

The line is open from Monday to Friday at the following times:

10.00am - 11.30am

1.30pm - 4.00pm

When can I visit?

Tuesday—Friday 2.15pm—3.45pm

Saturday/Sunday 1.45pm—3.45pm

Closed visits last a minimum of 30 minutes. Visitors must arrive at least 30 minutes before the end of visiting times. NB These times / details may be subject to change. Please contact the Visitors' Centre on 0191 376 4138 for more information.

Please note there are NO domestic visits on the last Wednesday of every month, to enable the extended Child Parent visit to take place.

How often can I visit?

Remand prisoners are allowed up to 4 visits between Tuesday—Friday and 1 visit between Saturday—Sunday. Convicted prisoners are allowed a minimum of 2 visits every 28 days.

Details of individual entitlement can be provided upon request.

Do I need a Visiting Order (VO)?

To visit a convicted prisoner, you must wait for a VO to be sent to you. You then book a visit for up to 3 adults, together with any number of children. All visitors must be named on the VO including babies and children. This should be confirmed when booking a visit. If a VO is altered in any way, it becomes invalid and you will not gain entry to the prison. It is best to ensure that all possible visitors are on the VO as names can be removed but cannot be added on the day of the visit. If you are visiting a prisoner on remand, you do not need a VO.



Specific identification will be required for entrance into the prison. Valid forms of identification are:

- Passport, including foreign passports and time expired passports where the photograph is still recognizable
- EC Identity Card
- Driving Licence with photograph
- Senior Citizen public transport pass issued by the local authority
- Employers or Student ID card, but only if this clearly shows the name of the visitor and the names of the employer or educational establishment and has a photograph or signature

If you are unable to produce one or more of the above forms of ID, staff may accept a combination of two or more of the following, but one of these must contain your photograph.

- Birth / Marriage certificate
- Rail or Bus pass with photograph
- Cheque book or credit / card (counts as one not two)
- Employers pass or ID card
- Young person proof of age card / citizenship card
- Trade Union or National Student Union card
- Library card, if it has a signature on for comparison
- Rent Book
- Foreign identity or residents card
- Expired documents from this list that appear satisfactory in other ways

This applies to every visit for each visitor.



What happens when I arrive at the Visitors' Centre?

When you arrive, your visit is registered at the desk. Support staff and low-priced canteen service are available while you are waiting to be called into the prison for your visit. There is also a play area for children under 8 years. A Youth Room for 8—18 year olds is available at weekends and school holidays.

What Can I Take Into The Prison?

You are allowed to take up to £10 per person in coins for refreshments. If a baby is visiting, NEPACS will provide nappies and baby wipes. You can take in a feeding bottle with juice or milk and a factory sealed jar of food, a plastic feeding spoon, a dummy and a babygrow and bib. All other personal belongings must be left in a locker at the gate (£1 returnable deposit is required).

What happens when I arrive at the Prison?

When you enter the prison you will go to the Search Area for ID checks and a security search. Your fingerprint and photograph will also be taken. There may be a drug detection dog on duty. If the dog indicates in any way that drugs have contaminated you, you will be offered a closed visit to assist in security.

Confidential Help

If you are concerned about anyone in custody, please speak to a Visits Officer in the Prison or any staff at the Visitors' Centre

Claiming Travelling Costs

There is an Assisted Visits Prison Scheme to help with the costs of visiting prison for a number of visitors on certain benefits. Please collect an Application Pack from the Visitors' Centre before your visit. Staff can help you complete the form. To find out more about this scheme, please ask at the Visitors' Centre.



Special Children's Visits

Mothers in prison can apply for special mother child visits to enable them to spend some quality time with their children in a relaxed environment.

Child parent visits take place weekly on Friday mornings - carers leave the child with Mum and come back to pick them up after the visit.

Playday visits take place on the last Wednesday of every month and children can spend the day with their parent – a buffet and refreshments is provided.

Family days take place quarterly. They are similar to the playdays, although an adult carer is allowed to stay with Mum and the children for the visit.

Sending money to inmates

Money cannot be handed to the prisoner. Money can be sent in by a postal order (made payable to 'HM Prison Service'). Write the name and number of the inmate on the back of the postal order and send it in an envelope addressed to the inmate at:

**HMP & YOI Low Newton
Brasside
Durham
DH1 5YA
0191 376 4000**

If you need more information or have any concerns about any aspect of visiting, please ask staff at the Visitors' Centre and we will be happy to help where we can.

What if the prisoner asks me to take drugs to him/her on a visit?

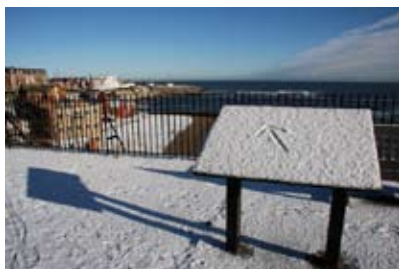
You would be taking a big risk. Taking drugs to a prisoner on a visit is against both the law and prison rules and is treated as a serious offence. The prison will call the police who will arrest the visitor, which could result in them receiving a prison sentence themselves. In any case, they will be banned from visiting for at least three months, have closed or non-contact visits for at least a further three months following the ban, and the visitor may then be subjected to thorough searches at each visit until the Prison Service is satisfied they are no longer a risk. The inmate you are visiting will also face disciplinary action which may mean their privileges, security category and prison placement may be affected. Most prisons search at least a random sample of visitors, many use drug dogs and CCTV, and all will have officers in the visits hall who will be watching for signs of visitors passing things to inmates or other visitors.

What does a drug dog do?

A drug dog has been trained to recognise the scent of a range of drugs. They can do this just by walking past someone. The dog will be on a lead and controlled by a trained officer. If the dog detects the scent of drugs on a person, it has been trained to indicate this - usually by sitting or standing in front of them.

What if the dog picks me out?

You may be searched to check if you are carrying drugs. If you are, the police will be called and you will be arrested. If no drugs are found, you may still have to visit in closed conditions. If a child is found to have drugs on them, the parent or carer with them will be held responsible.



Where can I get more information about drug use and what help is available?

The National Drug Helpline is a free, 24 hour helpline for anyone concerned about drug misuse. Their number is **0800 776600**.

Adfam is a national organisation that works with and for families who are concerned about drugs and/or alcohol. If you are looking for information specifically about prisons and drugs, you can call their Criminal Justice Ringback Service on 020 7553 7655. You can leave a message and an ADFAM support worker will call you back, or you can visit the Adfam website: <http://www.adfam.org.uk>

Visiting Prison With A Child

Enabling a child to visit their parent in prison is an important way of helping them come to terms with being separated from each other.

There is no easy way to prepare a child and it will take time and thought. If you have more than one child they will all need reassurance, but may have different questions and concerns. Some children may not want to visit and they should not be forced, but they will need to talk about the decision they have made.

If you are anxious about visiting yourself, try and find someone who will go with you. If you definitely do not want to visit, but your child does, you will need to arrange for someone else to take them.

There will be a lot to explain about the visit - this may be the first time your child has a real sense of where their parent is. It is best to be as truthful as possible - they may already know and understand more than you realise.

Children of any age need to be prepared for what the prison is like. It is important that you explain about the security measures: searches, locking doors, people in uniforms - even sniffer dogs. Visit rooms are all different, but they can be very noisy and busy places. It can be helpful to visit on your own first so you know what to expect. It will also mean that you can talk through the visit with the child's mother.

More information is available from the Visitors Centre, and they can provide age-appropriate booklets for children to help them understand the situation.

When the Day of the Visit Arrives

It is important to plan your journey, especially if you have a long distance to travel. It can be an anxious time as the visit draws near. Keeping your child amused during the journey by packing a few favourite toys, books or games should prove helpful.

Visits are different at each prison and their length will vary. Some can be very short and it is important that your child is prepared for that.

There is a small play area in the HMP YOI Low Newton visits room, with lots of toys and activities for children, supervised by NEPACS staff and volunteers. Children will need time to talk about their news, ask questions or just to sit with their Mum. It is important that they have the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings with them.

The time may pass very quickly and leaving at the end of a visit can be very difficult. A child needs to know that they can keep in touch either through visits, telephone calls or by letter - planning when and how that will happen is important.

It is impossible to predict how children will react after a visit. Some may need to talk about it, others may become quiet. All children will need reassurance and to know that you are ready to listen.

NEPACS play workers will also be on hand to offer support. You may see other changes in their behaviour, which are more difficult to deal with. This is likely to be a sign that they are having to deal with many different feelings - sadness, frustration, helplessness and even anger. They may direct that anger at you, but that is because you are closest to them.

As a parent facing a difficult and often unknown situation there may be times when you feel in need of support. If you do not have anyone close you feel you can turn to please telephone the Prisoners' Families Helpline on 0808 808 2003.

Remember; if you need more support or information don't forget that support is available. You can contact NEPACS at 0191 376 4138.

Please complete this before you go to court. This will help anyone looking after your home to know what needs to be done.

BILL	Cost	How It's Paid	When It's Paid
Council Tax			
Gas			
Electric			
Water			
Insurance			
T.V. Licence			
Cable			
Telephone			
Credit Card			
H.P. Payment			

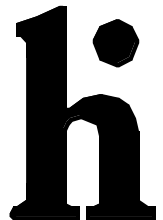
If you have any comments about the information provided in this booklet please contact, roweena@hiwecanhelp.com

Notes

Notes

**TACKLING
DRUGS
CHANGING
LIVES**

NE OFFENDER HEALTH PROGRAMME



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