

**Family and Significant Others Newsletter- August 2021**

For this month’s newsletter we are focusing on providing Families & Significant Others with information and support surrounding Prisoner’s money and debt management. This is because we are aware that sometimes this element of prison life can be stressful and worrying for not only those in custody but also for their loved ones. We also have a new Families & significant other support group that we have set up…please see below for further details and how to request attendance to the group!

**HOW DOES MONEY WORK IN PRISON?**

* If you are not already aware, prisoners are not allowed to use cash in prison so all the money they get sent in or any of their wages are put into their prison money account.
* The amount a prisoner can get paid is dependent on what activity they are engaging with; it can range from £8.45-£20.15. However, if they refuse to engage with purposeful activity, they only receive basic unlock pay- 50p a day.
* Prisoners can also be deemed as retired, long-term sick or short-term sick and the pay varies for these individuals and normally needs to be verified by other departments such as Healthcare, Mental Health etc.
* Money is used by prisoners for a range of things, mostly through the canteen as everything else is provided to them for free:
* Pin Phone Credit
* Vapes / Vape Capsules
* Stamps & Stationary
* Extra food, snacks etc.
* Extra toiletries
* Newspapers & Magazines
* £1 a week for a TV in a single cell & 50p in a double cell

**HOW DO I SEND IN MONEY TO MY LOVED ONE?**

The easiest way to send in money is online at [www.gov.uk/send-prisoner-money](http://www.gov.uk/send-prisoner-money) and using this service means your loved one will receive the money within 1-3 working days. You will need your debit card and the prisoner’s number and date of birth.

For other ways to send money in, look at the link: [www.gov.uk/staying-in-touch-with-someone-in-prison/sending-money](http://www.gov.uk/staying-in-touch-with-someone-in-prison/sending-money)

**You can send any amount of money in, but there are limits on how much prisoners are allowed to use each week to order from the canteen! This varies on what incentive level they are: Basic, Standard or Enhanced.**

**WHAT IS DEBT IN PRISON AND HOW DOES IT WORK?**

When we talk about ‘debt’ we mean the debts that prisoners owe to each other.

Please see below some key information about how debt can begin & spiral:

* The lending, borrowing or trading of items between each other. This could be Vapes, medication, clothes and other canteen items.
* Any prisoner who lends these items will often expect a lot more in return than was originally borrowed, which can make it difficult to pay the debt back.
* Illegal items such as drugs and mobiles can also be traded and this results in much larger debts building up. This is because these items are sold for much more than they cost outside.
* Once a prisoner becomes in debt, it can be hard to get out of it, and not paying these debts can have consequences such as bullying, blackmail and violence.

**WHAT DO I DO IF I AM CONCERNED ABOUT EITHER MY SAFETY OR THE SAFETY OF MY LOVED ONE/ FAMILY DUE TO DEBT OR SUBSTANCE MISUSE?**

* Phone the police and the prison straight away if you are being threatened or blackmailed by someone else.
* Phone the prison and let them know as we will always take action to keep the individual safe if we are aware their safety is at risk. You can do this by contacting:

**Safer Custody Hotline-** 01747 856457

**Safer Custody Mailbox-** SaferCustodyGuysMarsh@justice.gov.uk

**Family Mailbox-** FamilySupport.GuysMarsh@justice.gov.uk

Prisoners Family Helpline-

* Speak to a member of staff on visits whilst at the prison or the visits centre staff who will pass the message onto the prison on your behalf.
* Encourage your loved one to tell staff about it, so they can receive help. If the debt is rising due to drug misuse, ask them to ask for support for drug addiction via staff/ ISMS.

**YOU SHOULD NEVER:**

* Get involved in trying to pay back a prisoners debt for them, as most of the time this makes the situation worse and you could get into trouble yourself with both the police and a potential criminal gang.
* Transfer money to a prison money account or an outside bank account of someone you don’t know- you should always tell the prison is this happens.



****

**Virtual Family Support Group**

The Barnardo’s Family support service at HMP Guys Marsh offers a monthly support group for family and friends with a loved one in our care.

The groups give you a chance to meet and talk to others who are living with and experiencing having a loved one in prison.

We provide a safe space for families to feel heard and to ask questions.

The Barnardo’s family engagement worker will facilitate the group.

If you, or a loved one, would like more information about the group or would like to attend please contact our family engagement worker Aimee on aimee.derrick@barnardos.org.uk

**Our first family support group will take place at 11am on Thursday 9th September. Please contact us by August the 26th if you would like to attend.**

**Please use the below feedback form to let us know how you find our monthly Family Newsletters and what you would like to see on any newsletters- to help us in keeping you up to date with any information you would like to know!**

****

**Contact Us**

Should you have any concerns about one of the men in Guys Marsh you can contact the safer custody team by email SaferCustodyGuysMarsh@justice.gov.uk or if the matter is urgent call the Safer Custody Hotline on (**01747 856457**) and the local safer custody team will be made aware of your concerns.

If you have any general queries or questions then feel free to contact the Family Champions Tracy & Mia by email on FamilySupport.GuysMarsh@justice.gov.uk or the Guys Marsh Banardos family worker Aimee on Aimee.Derrick@barnardos.org.uk / GuysMarshVC@barnardos.org.uk

If you need to contact Staff to make them aware of personal matters such as births, deaths etc. then please contact the Chaplaincy by email on Chaplaincy.GuysMarsh@justice.gov.uk

You can also receive regular updates on what is happening at HMP Guys Marsh by following the official twitter account @HMPGuysMarsh

We are aiming to provide you with updates on any changes or new initiatives on a monthly basis. If you would like to sign up to receive the newsletter each month via email, then please contact the Family Support email above and we can add you to a mailing list!

Also, if there is anything you would like to see on the monthly newsletters, then please get in contact and make us aware!

Stay safe and keep well☺