

Your health in prison

What kind of healthcare should I get in prison?

You should be able to get the same quality and range of healthcare as you would in the community.

There will be a place in the prison where the healthcare services are located. This will usually be where you go to see a nurse, or doctor or a dentist.

Can I see a doctor or nurse in prison?

If you need to see a doctor or a nurse, speak to a prison officer on your wing or put in an application form.

Nurses and pharmacists will be able to deal with many problems without you needing to see a doctor. But ask to see a doctor if you think you still need to.

You can ask to see someone else in the healthcare team if you are not happy with what the doctor, nurse or other member of healthcare staff has told you about your health problem.

Can I see a dentist/optician?

Tell prison staff if you need to see a dentist or an optician.
Any treatment you get will be free unless it is not for medical reasons.

You will be able to get free glasses or other things for your eyes if you need them.

Can I see a specialist?

If your health problem cannot be dealt with by healthcare staff at the prison, one of these things may happen:

- The prison may get a specialist healthcare person to come into the prison to see you
- You may be moved to another prison to get the healthcare
- You may need to be taken to a hospital outside the prison. If this happens, the prison will still be in charge of you.

How do I get my medication in prison?

You cannot keep any medicines you bring with you into prison.

Tell the staff on reception, a doctor or a member of the healthcare team if you are taking any medicine.

A doctor in the prison will prescribe you the medicine you need. You can get this medicine from the chemist in the prison.

You may be allowed to keep your medicine with you after this. Prison staff will decide if you can do this and let you know.

What if I have mental health needs?

Many people have mental health needs. You should speak to healthcare staff if:

- You had a psychiatrist or community psychiatric nurse or spent time in hospital because of mental illness.
- You were taking medication in the community for your mental health.
- You feel worried or upset.
- You feel low or depressed.
- You feel anxious or frightened.
- You have difficulty sleeping or feel very tired.
- You think people are talking about you.
- You are hearing voices inside your head.
- You feel very angry.
- You feel confused or forgetful.
- You keep thinking the same thoughts over and over.

Complaints about healthcare

If you are not satisfied with the service you have received you may wish to make a complaint. You should speak to the healthcare team in the prison to do this.

Healthcare services should have their own complaints process and be able to give you information on this. This is a separate complaints system to the one used by the prison.

If you are not happy with the response you can submit a complaint to NHS England. You can contact them at:

NHS England
PO Box 16738
Redditch, B97 9PT
Tel 0300 3112 233

You should include the following:

- your name and address
- the name of the service you want to complain about
- a clear description of what you want to complain about and when it happened
- any relevant documents you have

NHS England advise that they need consent to share the complaint with the service so they can investigate it. They suggest you include the following line in order to speed up the process:

“I give permission for my complaint to be shared with (insert name of GP / dental surgery etc.) in order for NHS England to carry out an investigation.”

NHS England aims to respond within 20 working days.

If you are not happy with the response by NHS England you can then ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to look at your complaint.

Write to the ombudsman at

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

or call 0345 015 4033, 8.30am-5.30pm, Monday to Friday

Further information

The following may be of interest to you. If you are unable to access them elsewhere feel free to contact our Advice and Information Service and we will be happy to send you a copy.

The Prison Rules 1999

Prisoners' Advice Service information sheet about '*Healthcare*'

Contact our Advice and Information Service

We are a small service and we are independent of the prison service.

We can give you information on prison rules, life in prison and how to get help in prison.

Our freephone information line is **0808 802 0060**. This number is for **prisoners** only. This number is **free** and you do not need to put it on your PIN.

This number is open:

- Monday and Thursday afternoon from 3.30pm to 5.30pm.
- Wednesday morning from 10.30am to 12.30pm.

At other times, you can call on **0207 251 5070**. This number is open from Monday to Friday 10.00am - 5.30pm. This number is **not free** but you do not need to put it on your PIN.

You can also write to us at:

Prison Reform Trust
FREEPOST ND 6125
London
EC1B 1PN

You do not need to use a stamp.