

Polmont Prison Visitors Centre

Frequently asked questions – updated 01.12.2021

How do I book a visit?

Physical visits are booked by the person in custody, and they let you know the date/time. Virtual Visits are booked by the Visitor online.

How do I send in clothes etc?

- The person in custody requests an item;
- the request is sent to Reception;
- if it meets the criteria a Proform will be sent to the person in custody, who sends it on to their Visitor/ family member.
- Visitor can then post in the items, with the Proform.

Where do those in custody get soap and shampoo?

These can be bought through the canteen, or Residential areas provide basic supplies.

When will he get a mobile phone?

Anyone convicted can put in an application for a mobile phone as soon as they arrive at Polmont. Any person on remand who is due to be here for more than a month can also apply for a phone.

Can he phone any time?

Yes, the mobile phones can be used at any time, there is an allowance of 300 minutes per month, which at the moment cannot be topped up.

What is there for them to do while in Polmont?

There is a huge range of potential work parties, training courses and physical activities from Fork Lift Driving to working in the Laundry to Parenting classes. Those in custody can find out more from their Personal Officer.

Does he get his own cell?

It is normally single cell accommodation unless there is a reason why it is beneficial to share.

How do I send in money to a Prisoner Account?

The easiest way is by online bank transfer, the details of how to do this are on the SPS website or available from the Visitors Centre or Front of House. It is also possible to send in a Postal Order. Cash is no longer accepted.

I live very far away, can I get a longer visit less often to save on the travel?

It may be possible to accommodate a longer visit. The person in custody would request this from their Residential Officer, and the request will be assessed on an individual, case by case basis.

Do we have to pay for Virtual Visits?

At the moment Virtual Visits are free of charge. However, this is likely to change when physical visiting is back to normal levels.

What do I need to bring to a visit?

Visitors should bring photographic identification eg Passport or Driving Licence, plus official proof of their home address eg a utility bill. You may also want to bring cash or a bank card in order to purchase from the vending machine. There is a dress code for visiting where items such as hoodies and outdoor coats/jackets are not allowed.

How does the TAG system work?

This is dependent on the nature of the conviction, how long the sentence is and whether there are outstanding charges. If someone is eligible for a TAG it will be automatically offered.

What is an ICM?

Integrated Care Management is where prison staff discuss with the person in custody what is going to be a useful way for them to spend their time while at HMP Polmont, taking account of their past experiences, skills and what they hope to achieve.

I am worried about his/ her mental health, who can I talk to?

Initially you can speak to the Family Contact Officers or Visitors Centre Staff, who can then make contact with Residential staff.

How does he/she see a doctor/ dentist?

Initially the person in custody can request to see a nurse. If required they will be referred on to the doctor or dentist.

How many physical visits is a person on remand/ convicted entitled to?

During the current restrictions, they are entitled to two 45 minute visits per month. It may be possible to have additional visits if there are spaces, but it is important to ensure there is equal access to visits for all in custody.

If I do Virtual Visits and face to face visits, is this included in the number of Visits allowed?

You are able to have 2 Virtual Visits a week, this does not affect your number of face to face visits (2 per month).

Who can I speak to for information and support as I feel alone and stressed?

We know that having a loved one in prison is a difficult and stressful time. The Visitors Centre is here to provide emotional support, along with the Family Contact Officers.

What should I know when I arrive at Polmont for the first time?

See question above about what to bring. You will need to check in at Front of House, then put your belongings in a locker as you are not allowed to bring personal belongings into the visit. After this you will be asked to go through the security check, and then you can wait in the Visitors Centre until your visit is due to start. There are toilets available here, but none upstairs in the Visit Room. There are refreshments available in the Visitors Centre waiting area. There are children's toys and a play area, again this is very limited at present but will expand once restrictions are eased.

Is there a church or multi faith place of worship in the prison?

There is a Chaplaincy Team in Polmont who hold a variety of groups and services, or are available for one to one contact. They can be contacted on request.

How does the laundry system work?

People are given a kit bag, they put washing in there which is sealed with a tag. This is taken by the laundry team, washed and put back in the kit bag and sealed again, and returned to the individual.

What is the daily routine for those on remand/ convicted?

Those in custody have an option of various activities to do, 3 meals a day, 1 hour recreation in the Hall, and 1 hour outside.

At what age can someone visit independently?

16 years old

Can I send through Amazon?

Yes, as long as it is indicated on the Proform.

Can I send in Hoodies?

No. It is only items indicated on the Proform which you can send in.

When will the tours of the prison restart?

This will be after any risk from Covid transmission is removed. The FCO team will make you aware when this is due to restart.

When do people in custody get their Covid vaccinations?

This is in line with the general population in terms of age and health issues.

Where can we get refreshments?

The vending machines in the Visit Room are now open again for both drinks and snacks. These accept cash and credit/ debit cards.

The tea bar in the Visitors Centre has re-opened. We are offering a table service to ensure we are following all Covid guidelines.

Can those in custody receive newspapers or magazines?

Yes. The Premier shop in Brightons (on the way to the Train Station) has an arrangement with the prison. Go in there to set up the delivery. Main Street Brightons FK2 OJR.

How do I reclaim the cost of my travel?

The Assisted Prison Visits scheme enables you to claim back some/all costs of travel to the prison. The scheme provides help with 1 visit every 2 weeks. Criteria for this includes income support/universal credit /other benefits may also qualify. Please ask for a stamped confirmation of your visit from Reception. You can apply online at [Get help with the cost of prison visits - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) or complete a form (available at the Visitors Centre) and post in. We can help with a stamp or envelope if needed.

I have a baby/young child, can I bring my pram/buggy?

Yes there is an area at reception for you to leave pram/buggy.

Can I access virtual/video visits from another visitors centre near me?

Please see posters around the reception area. You can book a slot within the following visitor centre or we can help set up in our office. Please call for more information and how to book.

HMPAddiewell/Barlinnie/CorntonVale/Glenochil/Perth/LowMoss/Kilmarnock/Grampian/Shotts/Inverness/Edinburgh/Polmont

Someone else is driving me /supporting me to Polmont and may require to use the toilet facilities, they are not down for a visit, can they do this?

Yes. They will have to go through security first but can use the toilet.