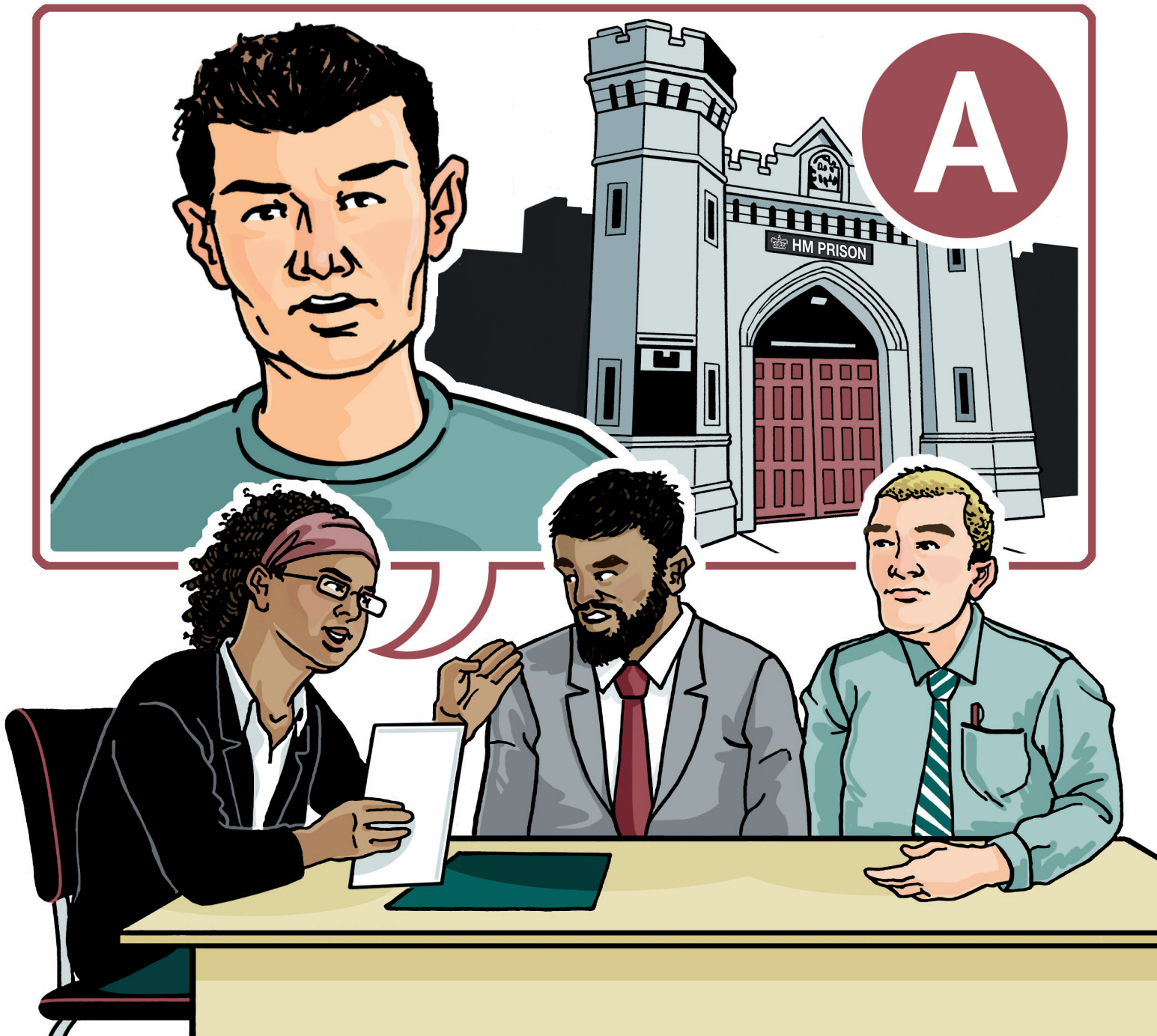


Category A Review

Easy Read Self Help Toolkit



About this document



This document was made by CHANGE, a charity led by people with learning disabilities.



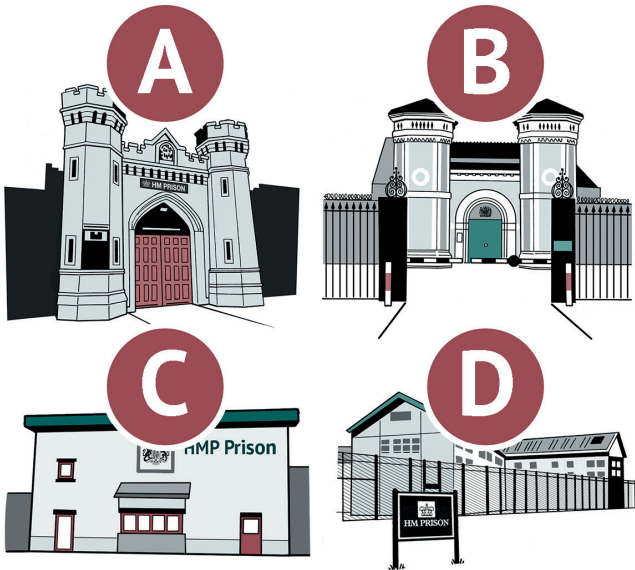
This document uses easy words and pictures to tell you about Category A Review.



You might want to read through it with someone else to help you to understand it more.

What is category A?

Adult male prisoners are split into four security categories from A to D.



Category A is the highest security category. This means it is for prisoners whose escape from prison would cause the most danger to the public and police.

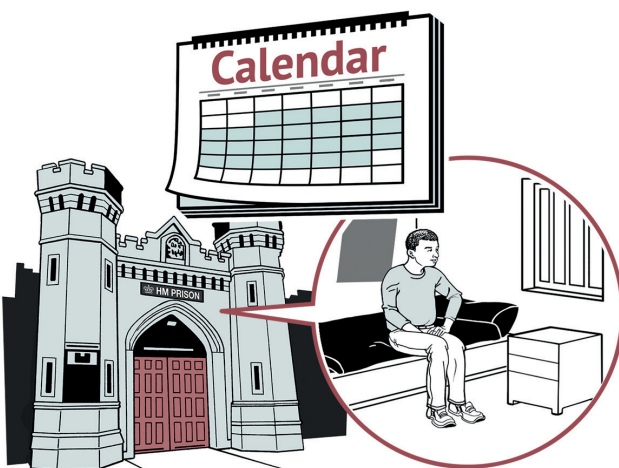


The aim of Category A is to make escape impossible by holding prisoners in high security prisons.

There are three groups of Category A prisoners:

1. Potential Category A

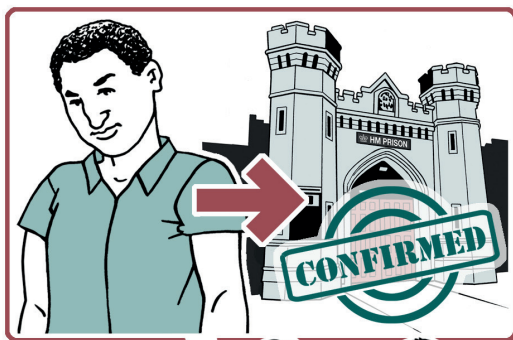
A temporary decision has been made to manage the prisoner as Category A but a final decision has not been made.





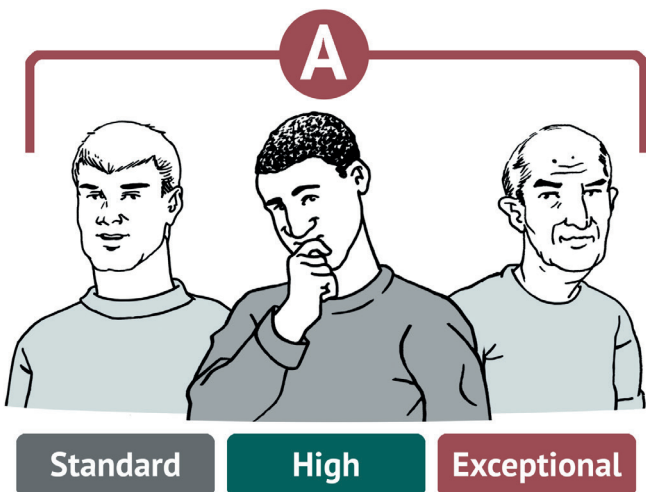
2. Provisional Category A

A decision has been made by the Category A Team that there is good reason for the prisoner to be Category A.



3. Confirmed Category A

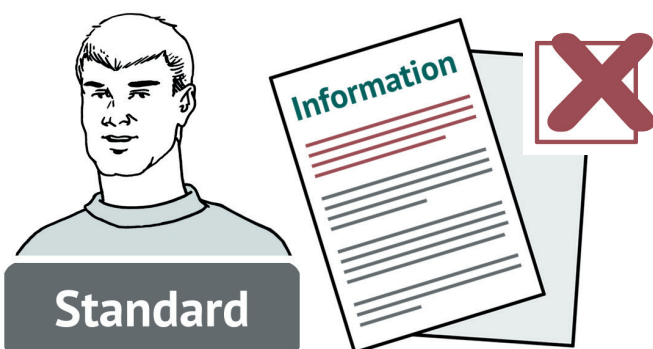
The prisoner has been confirmed as Category A at the first formal review.



All Category A prisoners are placed in one of three escape risk groupings.

A. Standard Escape Risk

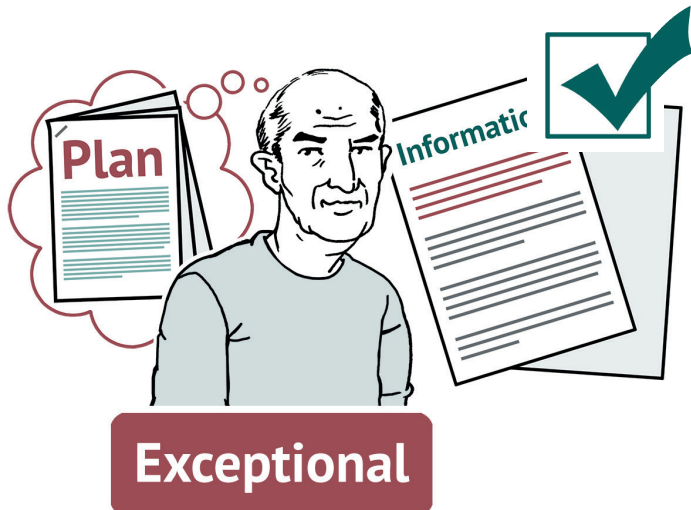
Where there is no information to suggest a threat of escape.





B. High Escape Risk

Where there is information to suggest that there is a risk that the prisoner may escape e.g. previous escape from custody.



C. Exceptional Escape Risk

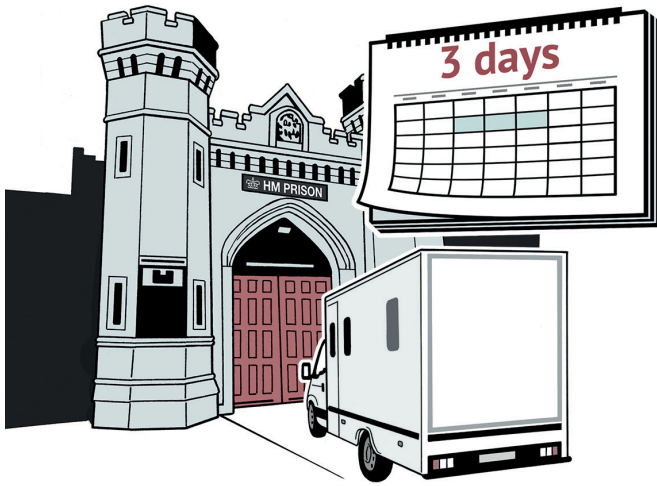
Where there is information to show that an escape is being planned.

Category A Groups: 1. Potential Category A Prisoners

Are you Category A?



The Category A Team has three days from when they receive information to decide whether to categorise a prisoner as Provisional Category A or not Category A.



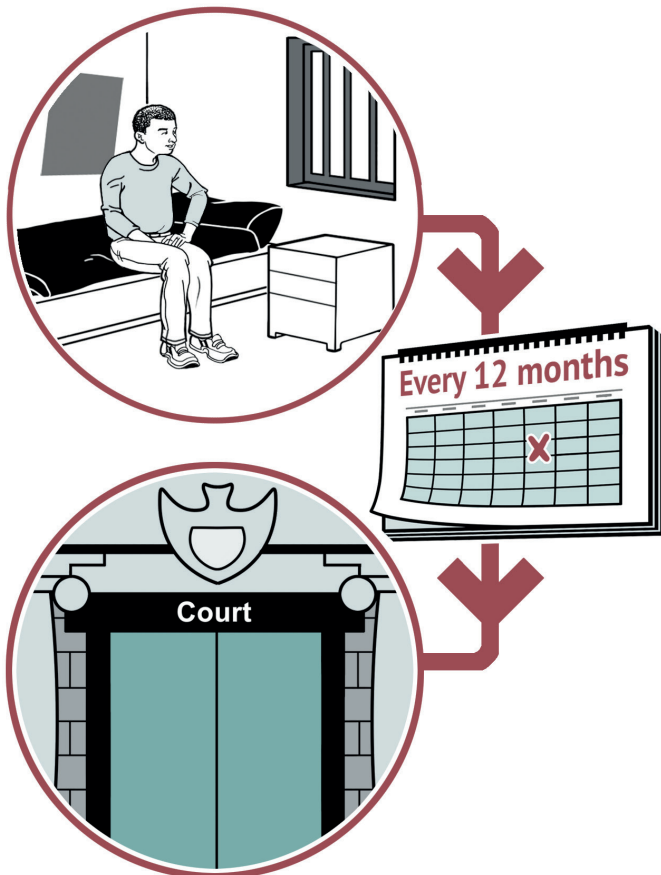
If it is decided that a prisoner is Provisional Category A they should be transferred to a High Security prison within three days.

Category A Groups: 2. Provisional Category A Prisoners

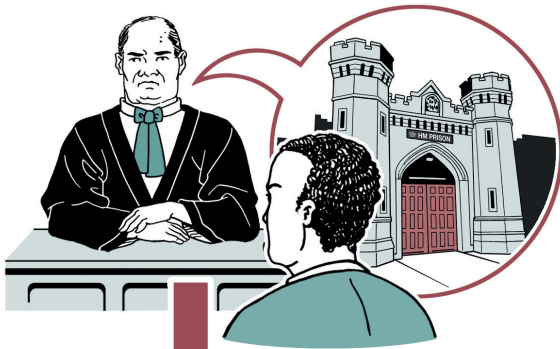
When is the categorisation of Provisional Category A prisoners reviewed?



Provisional Category A prisoners will have their categorisation reviewed at set times.



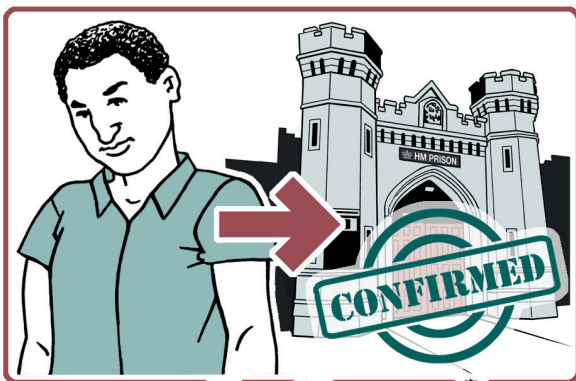
1. If on remand, every 12 months up to the beginning of trial or sooner if there is new information to show Category A is no longer needed



2. Straight after conviction and sentence



3. If still Category A after sentence, around three months later, this is called the First Formal Review



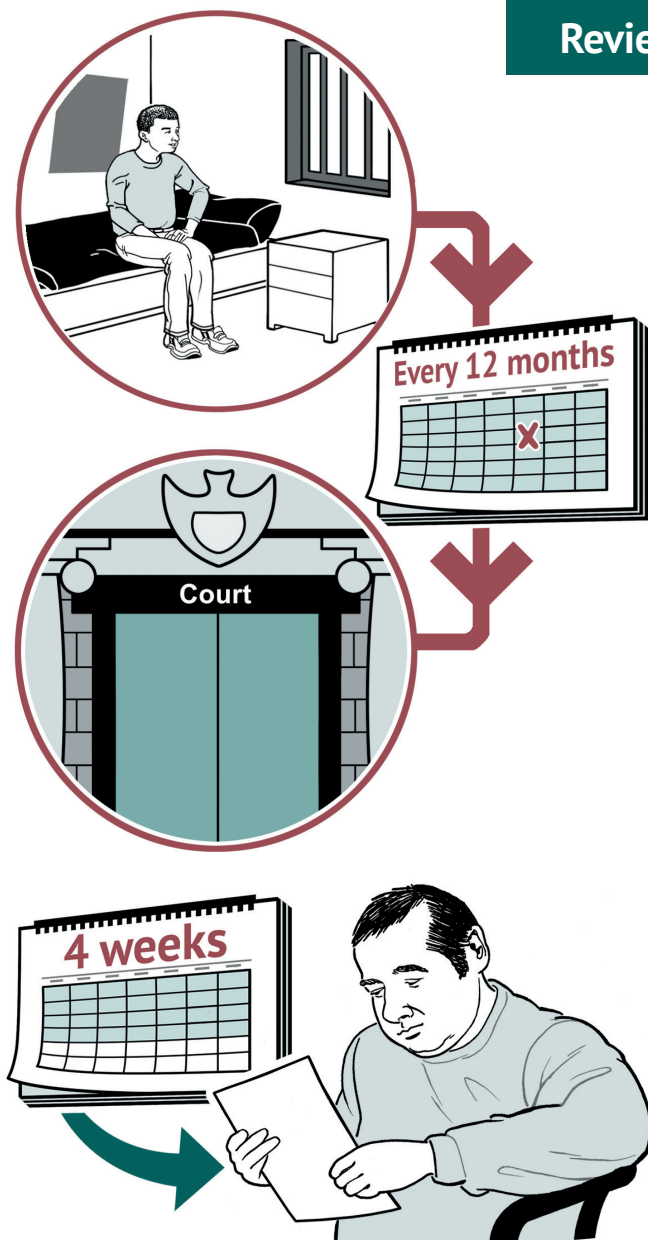
If it is decided after the First Formal Review that you will Category A, you will become Confirmed Category A.



What is the procedure for reviews of Provisional Category A prisoners?

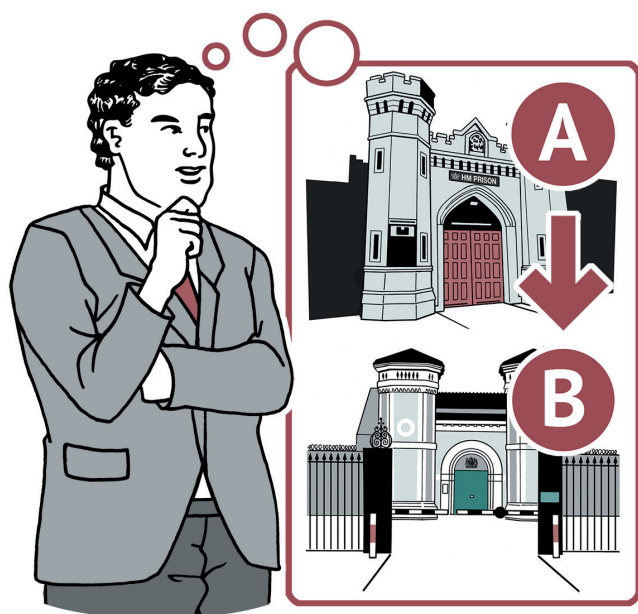
Reviews leading up to Conviction and Sentence

- You will have a review every 12 months leading up to trial.

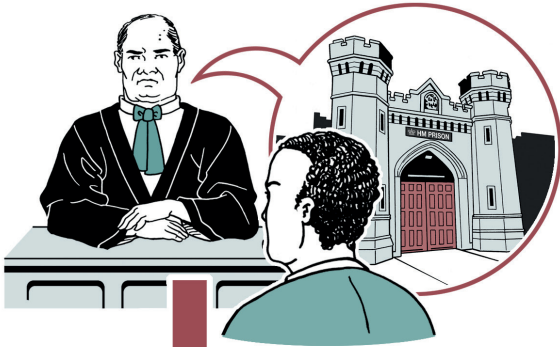


You should receive a decision within four weeks of the review.

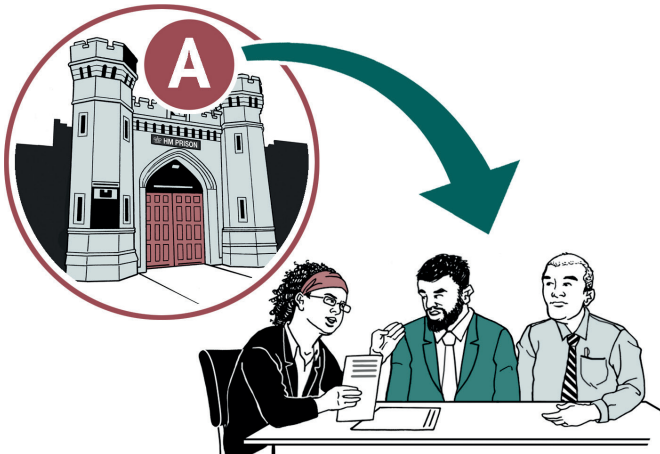
- If it is recommended that you should be downgraded from Category A then the final decision will be made by the Deputy Director of Custody.



Reviews immediately after conviction and sentencing



- Immediately after sentence a review will take place. You may be removed from Category A if appropriate.



- Otherwise you will remain Category A until your First Formal Review.

First Formal Review

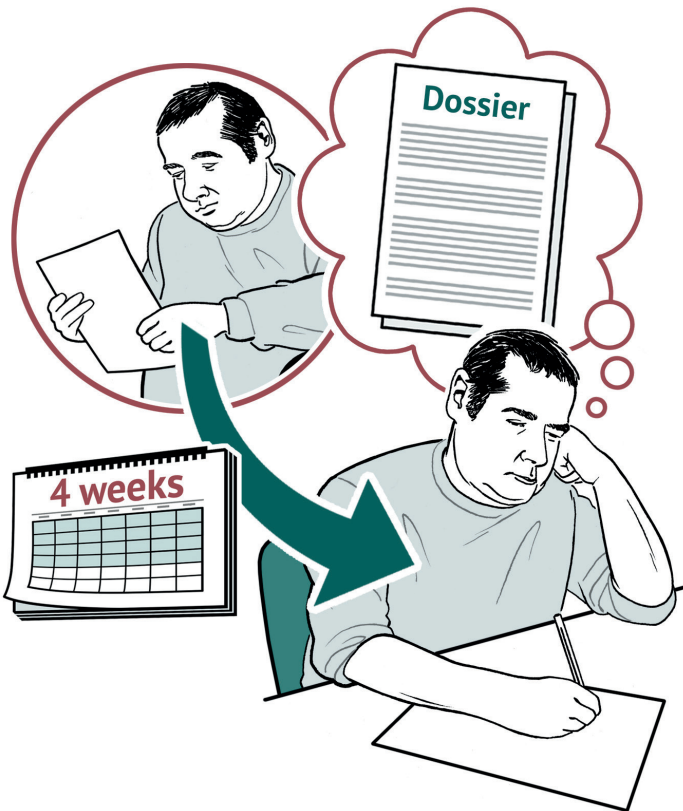


- Provisional Category A prisoners normally have the First Formal Review shortly after conviction and sentence.





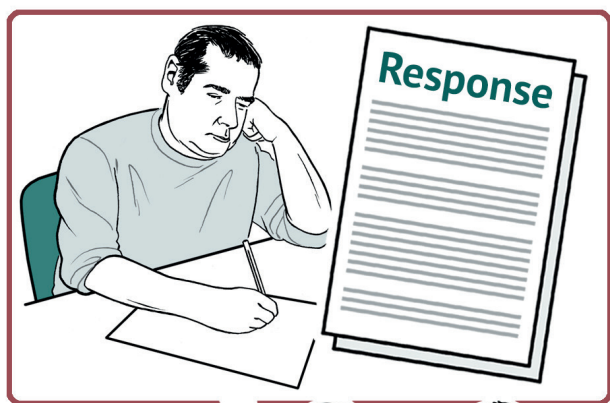
- Before your First Formal Review the Category A Team will prepare a document to help make a decision on your risk level during the review. This document is called a 'dossier'.



- You should receive a copy of the dossier with a letter asking if you would like to make any response to the dossier. You have four weeks to make a response.



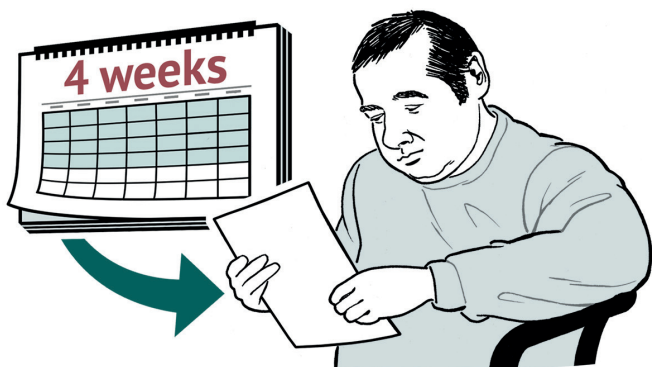
- The Deputy Director of Custody will lead the First Formal Review with a panel of police, psychologists and staff from the Category A team.



- If you made any response to the dossier this should be heard at the review.



- If you are confirmed as Category A then a review of your escape risk may also take place at the same time.



You will be sent a decision four weeks after the review takes place.



If you are unhappy with the decision you can appeal via the prison complaints system and send a response in your support.

Category A Groups: 3. Confirmed Category A Prisoners

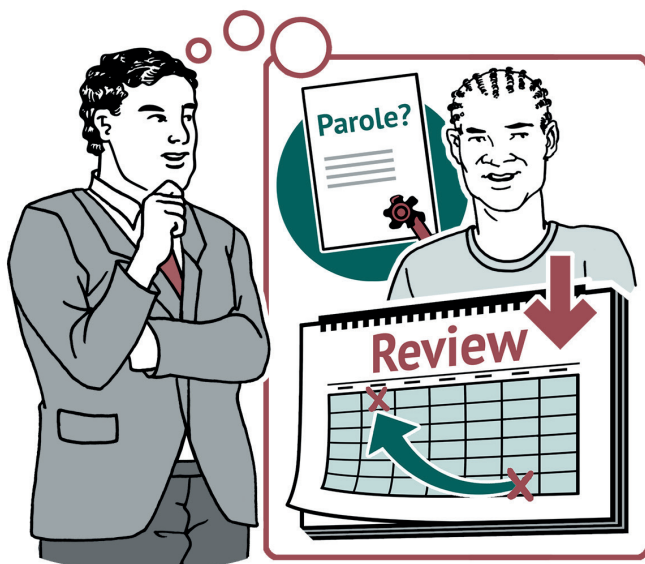
When is the categorisation of Confirmed Category A prisoners reviewed?



If you are confirmed as Category A at your First Formal Review you will next be reviewed in two years.



After this review you will be reviewed every year.



The Deputy Director of Custody may let a review happen sooner if there are special circumstances e.g. you have been put forward for parole.



Annual reviews may be postponed if more information is needed for the review, such as offending behaviour reports.

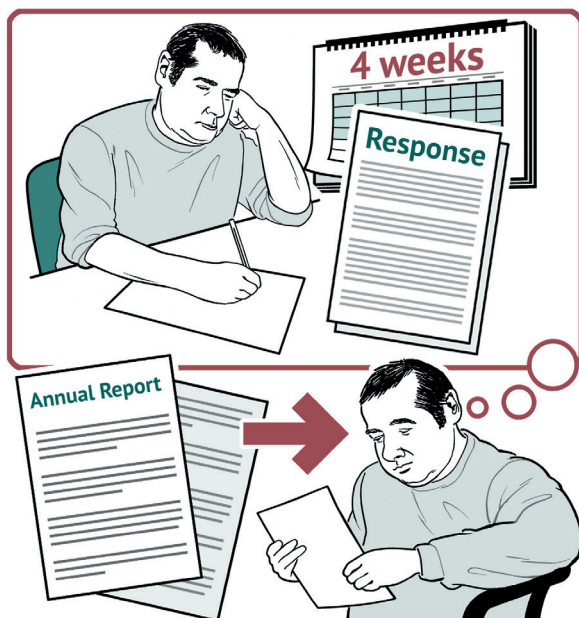


You may also ask for your review to be postponed.

What is the procedure for reviews of Confirmed Category A prisoners?



Prison staff must prepare an annual report of your behaviour and progress. This is then combined with any other relevant documents e.g. psychological assessment.



The report must be given to you at least four weeks before your review with the prison's Local Advisory Panel (LAP). This is so you have time to write a response to the report, if you wish.



If you have difficulty understanding the report, it must be explained to you verbally.

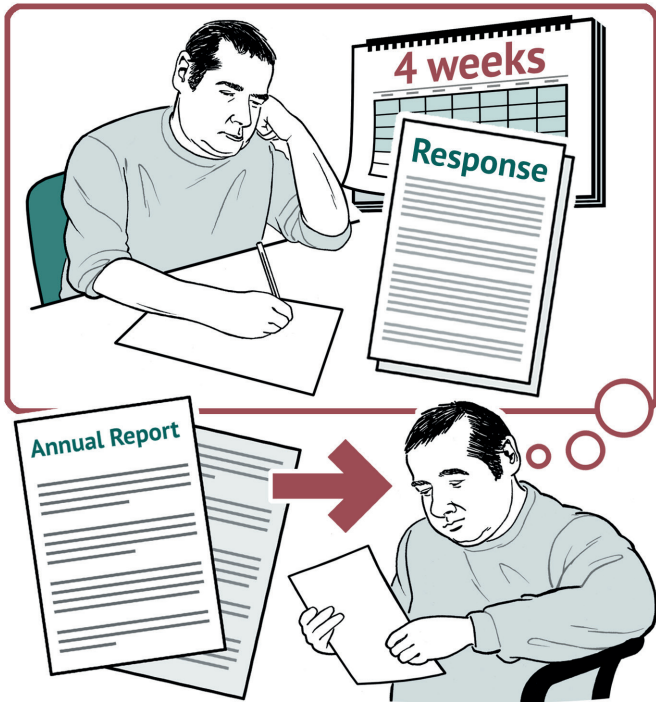


Some sensitive or confidential information may be left out of the report. If this information effects the decision you should be told. You should be given a description of the information.



You are allowed to request all of your personal data. The prison services must give this personal data to you if you want them to.

Can I make representations?

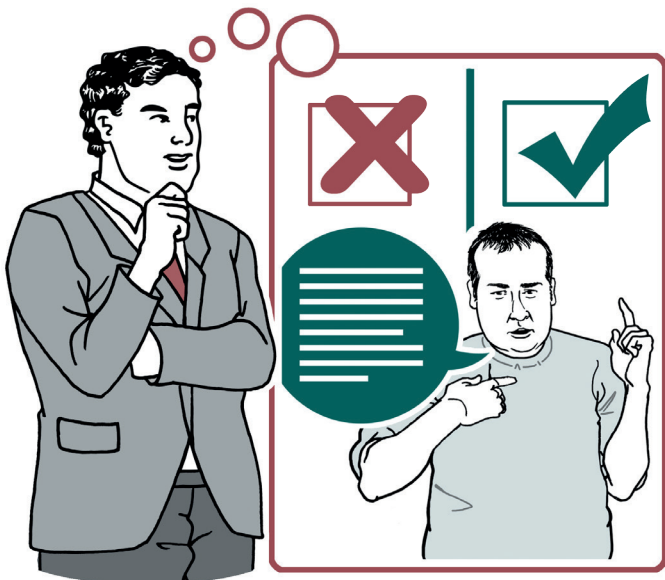


If you wish to write a response you must do so within four weeks of receiving the report.

Will I get an oral hearing?

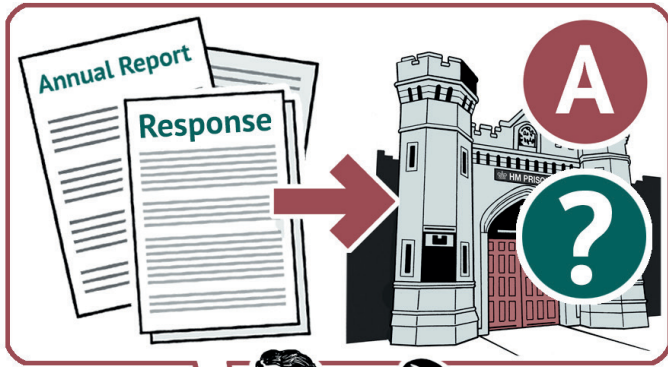


An oral hearing allows a prisoner, or his solicitor, to give a response verbally instead of in writing. These only happen in very rare cases.



A decision will be made on whether it is 'fair' to have an oral hearing e.g. there is factual dispute or there is need for explanation verbally.

What does the LAP consider?



The Local Advisory Panel (LAP) will look at the report and any written responses you have sent them. They will then decide whether you remain Category A.

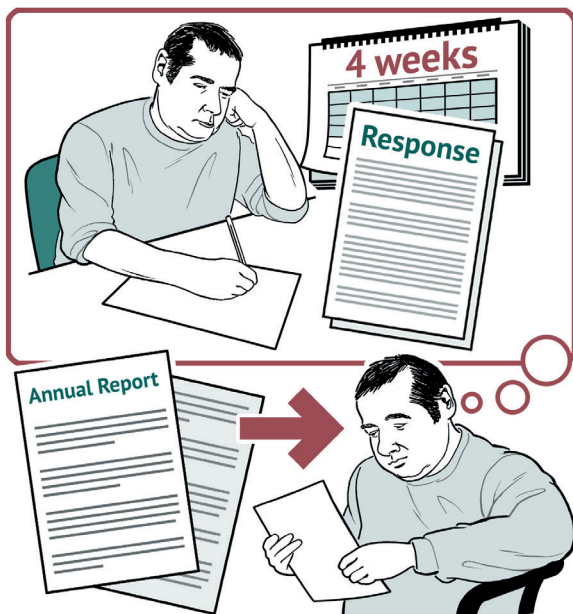


The report and the LAP's decision are then sent to the Category A Team for the final decision. The report will also be sent to you.

What happens to the LAP report?

Once you receive the report you may make a written response to the Category A team.

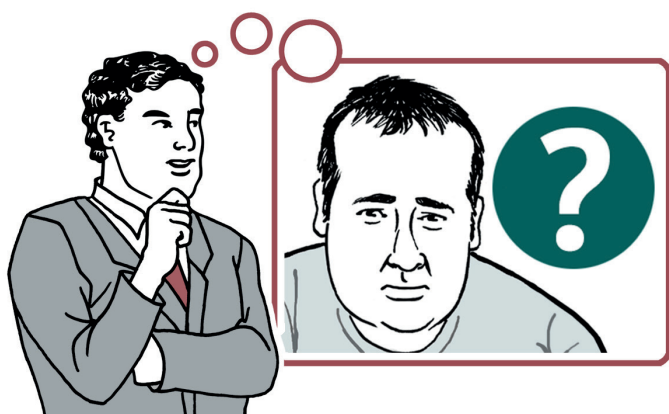




The Category A team should make their final decision within four weeks of getting the report, so you should send your written response to them in this time.



The Category A Team will make a decision based on the report and any written response from you.



They will either complete the review and make the final decision or send the case to the Deputy Director of Custody for the final decision.



You should receive confirmation of the final decision within four weeks.

What if the Category A Team does not make the final decision?



The Category A Team will send the case to the Deputy Director of Custody if they think you should be downgraded from Category A, if DDC has requested that the decision be made by them, or you haven't had a review for five years.

What does the Deputy Director of Custody (DDC) do?



The DDC will be assisted by an advisory panel and meetings are usually held once a month.

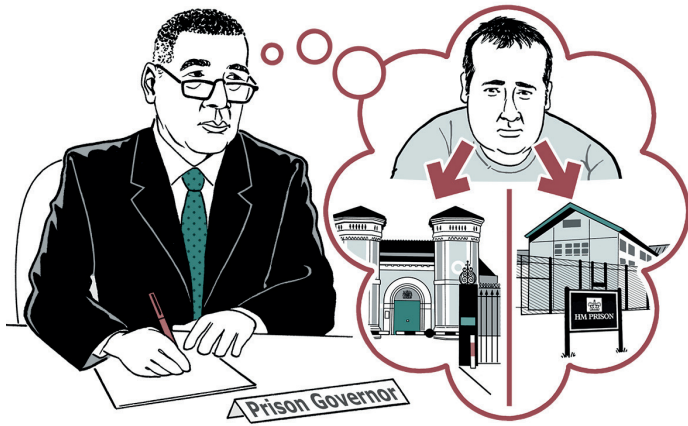


The Category A Team will inform prison staff of the decision straight away.

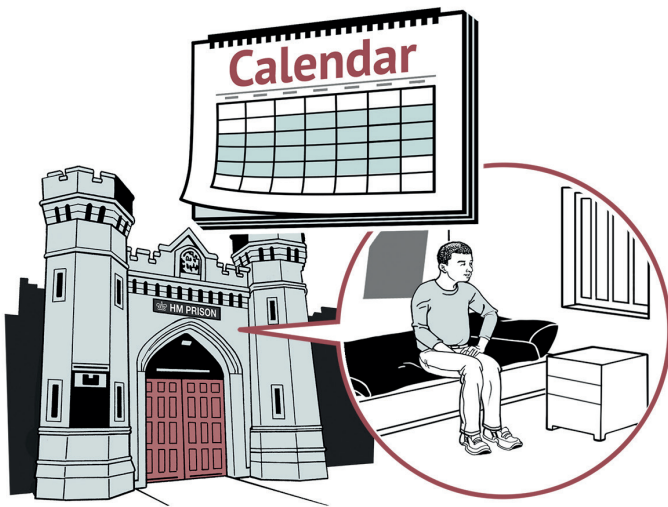


The Category A Team will let you know of the decision in four weeks and will send you a summary of the information.

What happens if I am downgraded?



If you are downgraded the Governor and prison staff will decide on where you will be moved to and your categorisation.

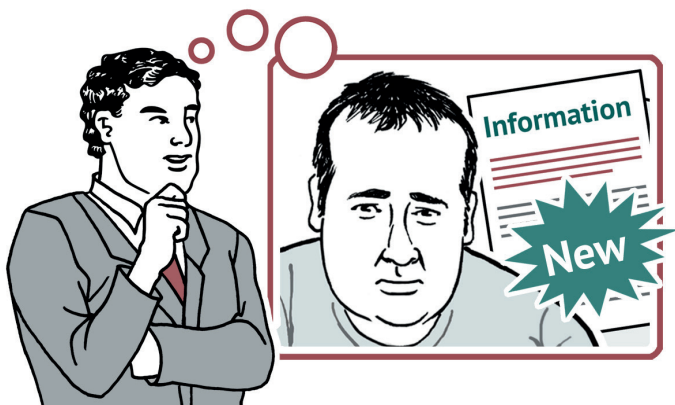


The DDC may say that you are downgraded but need to stay in High Security. In this case the decision will let you know how long you are to stay in High Security.

What if I am unhappy with the decision?



You can appeal the decision via the prison complaints system and write a written response giving reasons why the decision should be reviewed again.



The DDC may review the decision again if there is new information.

Escape Risk Classification

How and when will my escape classification be reviewed?

A



Standard

High

Exceptional

All Category A prisoners are placed in one of three escape risk classifications: standard, high and exceptional.



Provisional and Confirmed Category A Prisoners will have their escape risk reviewed every 12 months if High, or every 6 months if exceptional.

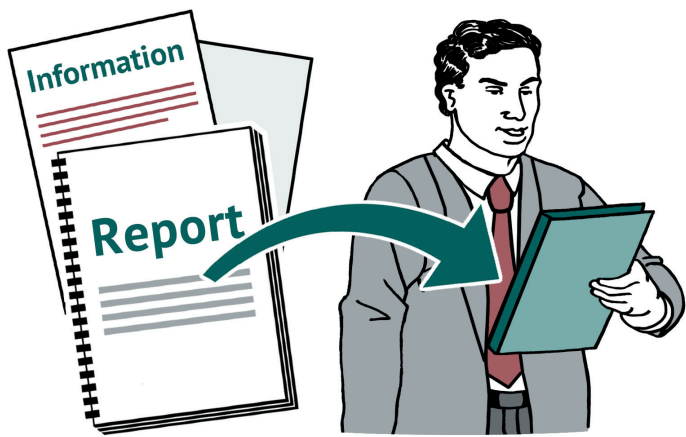


High

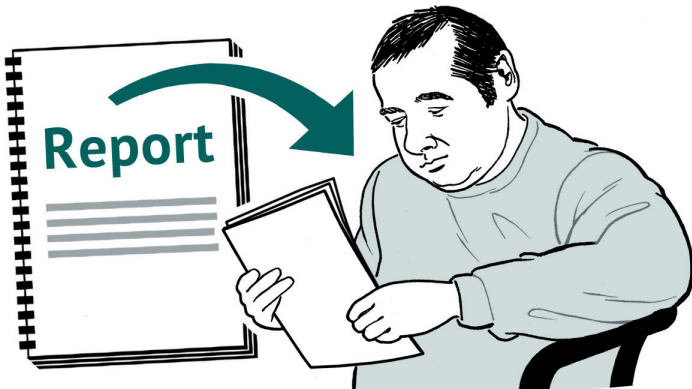
Exceptional



If new information becomes available a review will happen straight away.



When a high or exceptional review takes place a caseworker will collect all the information and summarise it in a report for the DDC.



A copy of the report will be sent 6 weeks before the review so that you can make a written response.



When can I make representations?

If you wish to make a written response you must do so within four weeks of receiving the report.



If you make a written response it will be passed on to the Category A Review Team two weeks before the review.

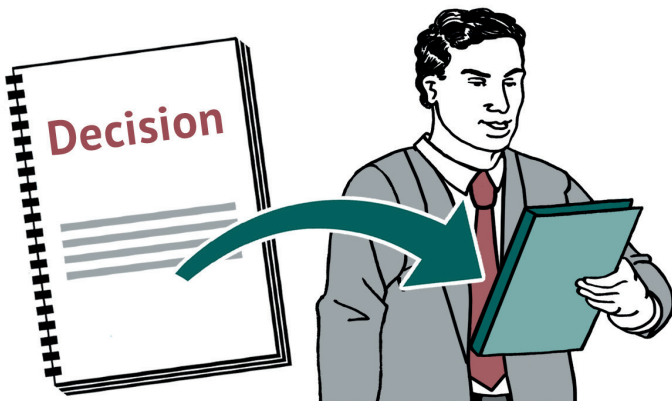
Who will make the decision?



The Category A Review Team will make a recommendation based on the report and any written response you make.



All the information will then be sent to the Head of High Security Prisons Group. They will then make a decision.



The decision may be sent to the DDC if a downgrade has been recommended, or if it is the third review where no downgrade has been recommended.



The DDC will conduct the review with a panel of police officers, psychologists, and staff from the Category A Team.

How will I know about the decision?

You should hear about the decision four weeks after the DDC review. If you are to be downgraded this will happen straight away.



What if I am unhappy about the decision?

You can appeal via the prison complaints system and submit a written response giving reasons why the decision should be reviewed.



The decision will be reviewed if there is new information to consider.



PRISONERS' ADVICE SERVICE

THE INDEPENDENT LEGAL CHARITY PROVIDING INFORMATION AND REPRESENTATION TO PRISONERS