

# Prisoners' Advice Service Information Sheet

## WHO ARE WE?

The Prisoners' Advice Service (PAS) is an independent registered charity. We do not accept Prison Service or other government funding (other than via the Legal Aid scheme) as this may affect our independence. We receive most funding from charitable trusts and foundations, in addition to a small amount of legal aid and some money from individual donors.

We have ten members of paid staff: six legal caseworkers (some of whom specialise in specific areas such as women prisoners, race discrimination and community care), one advice line worker, an office manager and two fundraisers. We also provide placements for trainee solicitors under various arrangements and have a number of both legal and fundraising volunteers who provide invaluable assistance with our work.

## WHAT DO WE DO?

- PAS provides legal advice and information to prisoners in England and Wales regarding their rights, the application of the Prison Rules and conditions of imprisonment.
- PAS takes up prisoners' complaints by providing free advice, assistance and representation on an individual and confidential basis, and by taking legal action where appropriate.
- PAS produces a regular bulletin entitled Prisoners' Legal Rights, which is distributed to subscribing prisoners (free), solicitors, barristers, academics and non-governmental organisations.

We can explain to you what the Prison Rules mean and how they affect you, and advise you if they are being wrongly applied in your case. If you have a complaint about your treatment you can contact us for advice. It may help if you also submit a complaint form on your wing/unit. We will either advise you on how to take your complaint further yourself, take it up for you and enter into correspondence with the prison and Prison Service on your behalf, or provide you with details of solicitors' firms who deal with the relevant field of law and whom you can contact for further assistance. Most of our work is done through letters or telephone calls. We do not generally make prison visits except where we have taken on a particular legal case for a prisoner. If we cannot assist on a prison law matter we will give you a referral list of solicitors. We do regular Outreach Clinics in a number of prisons.

**Examples of issues we can advise on:** Parole - Life Sentences - Categorisation - Adjudications - Sentence Calculation - Licences/Recalls - Disability Discrimination – Race/Religious Discrimination

**We provide leaflets and self-help toolkits on a range of topics including:** Transfers - Property - Mandatory Drug Testing – Categorisation - Home Detention Curfew – Incentives and Earned Privileges – Foreign National Prisoners – Confiscation Orders – Visits – Work and Pay – Healthcare – Parental Responsibility – LGBT+ Rights

## HOW DO WE DO IT?

You can telephone us on **020 7253 3323** on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10am to 12:30 pm and 2pm to 4:30 pm. You should not have to get the number cleared on your PIN as it should be 'globally bypassed'. Please let us know if you experience any difficulties with this. You can write to us at PO BOX 46199, London EC1M 4XA. If you are outside prison you can email [advice@prisonersadvice.org.uk](mailto:advice@prisonersadvice.org.uk) or use the contact form on our website.

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- If you want us to help, we need your permission, so contact us directly. We can then speak to family members or friends if you wish us to.
- We cannot deal with an issue another solicitor is dealing with, but we can give solicitors advice and information on prison law.
- You are within your rights to write to us in confidence for legal advice. Write '**Rule 39 applies**' on the outside of the envelope and seal the letter. Rule 39 is the Prison Rule relating to confidential legal correspondence and is only for use in letters such as those to a court or legal advisor.
- The information on this sheet is also available in a variety of other languages and you can write to us in languages other than English. We will endeavour to have the letters translated and to reply in the language you have written in; however there may be some administrative delay.