

# FACTSHEET

## Returning from prison abroad

Prisoners Abroad, 89 – 93 Fonthill Road  
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Charity Number 1093710



**Returning to Britain following imprisonment can be a difficult and stressful experience. You may not have lived in the country for many years and may be leaving behind your family and your familiar way of life. Or you may be returning to your family and having to begin the process of re-establishing relationships. Whatever your circumstances, you may feel you need some practical guidance and advice in the initial stages of resettlement. This leaflet explains the ways in which you can prepare for your release and how Prisoners Abroad can help you on your return.**

### **1 Preparing for your release**

It is important for you to try to do some preparation for your resettlement prior to your release. Having identification and information about yourself helps with establishing welfare benefit claims and also accommodation. Here is a checklist to help you:

- Contact your Caseworker at Prisoners Abroad to inform them of your likely release date and to request an Initial Needs Assessment form.
- Contact your local British Consul to talk over the release process and travel arrangements.
- Make sure you talk to the prison authorities and the Consulate about obtaining a full passport for travel and for identification purposes on return.
- Get together any other forms of identification (especially if it includes a photograph) you may have
- e.g. Driving Licence and Birth Certificate.
- Obtain copies of any official documentation that maybe available concerning any health problems, drug or alcohol problems or treatment programmes you may have undertaken.
- Try to bring as much money as you can with you, as this will help you during the initial days of your release.
- Check with any relatives or friends in the UK to see if they can offer you any temporary help e.g. a place to sleep for a few days.

We understand that some of the above may be very difficult or even impossible for you to do, but try to do what you can. The Prisoners Abroad Resettlement Service has produced some leaflets on applying for welfare benefits when you first arrive, finding emergency accommodation and obtaining medical treatment in the UK. Please write to us if you would like copies or if you have any other questions about resettlement.

**We can only offer a resettlement service to prisoners who are in contact with us before they arrive back in the UK. If you would like us to help you when you come back please make sure that you get in touch with us at the earliest opportunity.**

*Please contact us if you require any further information or assistance.*

## **2 When you first arrive**

A good first point of contact, on your day of arrival is Travelcare, which is a social work agency based at both Gatwick and Heathrow Airports. They will assist you in contacting us and giving you directions to our offices. As soon as you land, make your way to an information desk and ask to be referred to Travelcare.

### **Travelcare (Heathrow)**

Queens Building, Heathrow Airport, Hounslow, TW6 1BZ

Tel. 020 8745 7495

Opening Times: Mon - Fri 09.00am -17.00pm

### **Travelcare (Gatwick)**

South Terminal, Gatwick Airport, RH6 0NP,

Tel. 01293 504 283

Opening Times: Mon-Fri 09.00 – 17.00 Sat & Sun 09.00am – 16.00pm

If you arrive out of office hours and have nowhere to stay it may be best for you to wait in the airport until Travelcare is open.

If you arrive at the weekend you can head for central London to The Passage Day Centre. They have a shower facility and provide very cheap meals. However, they cannot access accommodation at the weekends.

The Passage is open 7am – 12 Midday Sat & Sun.

### **The Passage**

St Vincent's, Carlisle Place, London, SW1P 1NL

Tel. 020 7828 4183

The nearest underground station to The Passage is Victoria.

If you need accommodation and arrive out of usual 9am – 5pm office hours, you can try calling Shelterline. They can give you advice about obtaining emergency accommodation. This is a very busy line and you may have to try a few times before getting to speak to a worker.

The Shelterline Telephone Number is 0808 800 4444. Shelterline is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week. This number is free to call from any UK landline telephone.

## **3 Prisoners Abroad Resettlement Service**

The Prisoners Abroad Resettlement Service is open between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm Monday – Friday.

When you make contact with Prisoners Abroad following your release, you will be allocated a keyworker. If you arrive in London and come to Prisoners Abroad for direct assistance, your keyworker will conduct an initial assessment to find out about your particular needs. We will then ask you to engage in a plan of work to begin your resettlement. (Please note that you will need to keep appointments and follow your action plan or we may not be able to offer you help) If you are returning to another part of the country, we can advise you by telephone and assist with writing support letters for you and finding services in your area that may be able to help.

The service we provide offers:

- Advice and Assistance with finding emergency accommodation
- Emergency Grants (dependant on individual circumstances)
- Advice on Welfare Benefits
- Referrals to appropriate agencies offering specialist help e.g. with medical or drug problems
- The opportunity to talk through experiences, concerns or worries with your keyworker

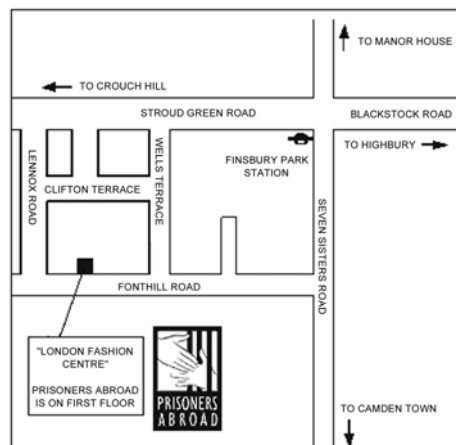
We also offer use of:

- a computer
- temporary luggage storage
- shower facility

Please be aware that Prisoners Abroad staff are unable to meet you at the airport when you arrive in the UK.

#### **4 How to find us**

Underground (Victoria or Piccadilly lines) and British Rail - Finsbury Park Station, use the Wells Terrace exit. Turn left out of the station and right at the junction with Fonthill Road. Prisoners Abroad is on the first floor of the London Fashion Centre. Buses: 4, 19, 29, 106, 210, 236, 253, 259, 279, W3, W7.



If you require this leaflet in a large print format, please contact us. Our details are below.

Tel: 020 7561 6820

+44 20 7561 6820 from outside the UK

Email: [info@PrisonersAbroad.org.uk](mailto:info@PrisonersAbroad.org.uk)

Mail: Prisoners Abroad, 89-93 Fonthill Road, London N4 3JH, United Kingdom