

What Now?

Useful things to know before
and after your release

LoCall NUMBER

Throughout this booklet we use the **LoCall number**

1890 777 121

This is the **Citizen Information
Phone Service** number.

The line is open from
9.00 am to 9.00 pm
Monday to Friday.

All calls are charged at local rates.



FOREWORD

You may face many difficulties on your release from prison. But there are also opportunities, perhaps the greatest being that you have a fresh start to begin a new life.

However, this may seem like a mountainous task, rather than an opportunity, especially if you have no family or support network of friends.

Some of the difficulties you may face include finding a home, claiming a social welfare payment, health treatment, getting a job or more education and training, and legal issues.

The booklet is packed with useful information, and is written so that you can find the information you need easily.

If you need further information on any of the services described in this booklet don't hesitate to contact the service provider directly yourself. If it's a social welfare matter you can call to any of our local Social Welfare Offices where there is an Information Officer available to answer all your queries.

I hope you find this booklet of huge benefit. It will also be of interest to your families and the many groups who are available to help and support you on your release.

I wish you well as you begin your journey back into the community.

Mary Coughlan, T.D.

Minister for Social & Family Affairs

INTRODUCTION

This guide brings together information on a range of topics some of which you will need straight after your release and some later on. It also points out what you can do to prepare for your release while you are in prison. As a prisoner or ex-prisoner you may find yourself having to deal with all the realities of life on the outside. You may not know where to go or who to turn to for the right information for the many issues you are faced with. This guide was written to provide you with all the facts you might need to help you survive when you are released from prison.

You don't have to read the guide all in one go. We have included chapters on social welfare payments, finding a home, managing your money, education, work and training, health and legal matters. For each topic we have given a single telephone number or the best contact person who will be able to point you in the right direction. At the end of the booklet you will find space to write in the phone numbers that you will need.

This guide was prepared by the Department of Social and Family Affairs, along with Comhairle, the Prison Service, the Probation and Welfare Service, FÁS, PACE, The Linkage Programme, Pathways and NEVA. We would like to thank everyone who was involved in putting it together. Special thanks to Deirdre Hannigan who facilitated at the meetings of the Advisory Committee and edited this booklet. While it would never be possible to include everything that might be of interest to every ex-prisoner, we hope the topics we have included are what you need to know.

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I have no money -
can I apply for
a payment?

SOCIAL WELFARE PAYMENTS

I have no money – what can I apply for?

If you have no money when you leave prison, and you are available and looking for work, you can apply for **Unemployment Assistance** or **Unemployment Benefit**.

How do I apply?

Go to your local **Social Welfare Office**. If you are not sure where your local Social Welfare Office is, telephone the Department of Social and Family Affairs on **(01) 704 3000** and ask for Information Services or telephone **LoCall 1890 777 121**.

Most Social Welfare Offices are open
Monday to Friday, from 9.15am to
12.00pm and from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm.

Staff at the social welfare office will explain:

- what **conditions** you need to meet when applying for the payment, and
- what you **need to do** to continue getting it.

What do I need to bring with me?

Bring **originals** of all of the following:

- your **certificate of imprisonment** or your **temporary release papers**,
- either your current **passport** or the long version of your **birth certificate**,
- other I.D., such as a current **driving licence** or **bank book**,
- a **household bill** (such as gas or ESB), as proof of your address, **and**
- if you were previously employed, a **P45** or a **letter from your employer** stating that you have stopped working and why.



See pages 39+42



See page 43

Even if you do not have all the documents you should still apply for an unemployment payment on the first day of your release.

What else can I apply for?

If you:

- cannot work due to illness or disability,
- are aged 65 and over,
- are a widow or widower, or
- are a parent on low income or a one parent family, there are **many other payments** available.

To check if you can get any of these social welfare payments, call in to your **local Social Welfare Office** and ask to speak to an **Information Officer**. You can also telephone **(01) 704 3000** or **LoCall 1890 777 121**. You can e-mail social welfare at **info@welfare.ie**.

You can ask for any social welfare leaflet or application form by telephoning **LoCall Leaflet Line 1890 20 23 25**.

Can I get any extra assistance?

You may also get assistance under the **Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA)** scheme. You may get a weekly SWA payment while you are **waiting for a decision** on another social welfare payment.

Other payments under the SWA scheme include:

- once-off exceptional needs payments,
- rent or mortgage interest supplements, and
- heating supplements.

You must pass a **means test** when applying for **Supplementary Welfare Allowance**.



How do I apply?

Apply to the **Community Welfare Officer (CWO)** at your local health centre as soon as you need to.

What do I need to bring with me?

Bring **originals** of all of the following:

- your **certificate of imprisonment** or your **temporary release papers**,
- either your current **passport** or the long version of your **birth certificate**,
- other I.D., such as a current **driving licence** or **bank book**,
- a **household bill** (such as gas or ESB), as proof of your address, **and**
- if you were previously employed, a **P45** or a **letter from your employer** stating that you have stopped working and why.

To find out the **CWO's** office hours, or where your local health centre is, telephone **LoCall 1890 777 121**.



How much?

To Let

YOUR HOME

WHILE YOU ARE IN PRISON

If you were the sole tenant of a flat or a local authority house, there are certain things you should do.

I am the sole tenant of a local authority house – what should I do?

If there is nobody living in your home, it may need to be secured against illegal entry and theft. You may also be able to keep your tenancy open for a short time – the local authority looks at each case individually. Contact the **Housing Officer** in your local authority and tell them that you are in prison.

I'm getting Rent Supplement for my flat – will I still get it?

Get in touch with your **Community Welfare Officer** and tell them you are in prison. If you are in for less than 13 weeks you may continue to get your payment.

PREPARING TO LEAVE

If you do not have accommodation, finding a place to stay when you get out is a priority.

What can I do about getting somewhere to stay before I leave prison?

You can make an application to put your **name** on the **waiting list** for local authority housing up to **nine months before** your expected date of **release**.

To apply to go on the housing list, contact the **Housing Officer** in your local authority. To find the number for your **Housing Officer**, telephone **LoCall 1890 777 121**.

Remember! Apply to put your name on the housing list as soon as possible.

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

I've nowhere to sleep - where do I get a bed for the night?

The local authorities and health boards work closely with various voluntary agencies to provide a range of accommodation. Telephone the following numbers if you have nowhere to stay:

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Dublin | 1800 724 724 |
| Cork | (021) 496 3052 |
| Galway | 1800 788 887 |
| Limerick | (061) 48 12 12 |
| Waterford | (051) 309900 |

If you are under 18, register with the duty Social Worker in your local health board. To find your duty Social Worker, ask your Probation and Welfare Officer or telephone LoCall 1890 777 121.

GETTING YOUR OWN PLACE

Where do I look for accommodation to rent?

You can look in newspapers, check notice boards in your local supermarket or ask around in your local area.

What do I need?

Most landlords want a week's or a month's rent before you move in. Check with your **Community Welfare Officer** to see if they can help you with a deposit.

If you cannot pay your full rent on your own, you may also apply to the **Community Welfare Officer** for **Rent Supplement**, which is subject to a **means test** and other conditions.

To get the address and contact details of your local health board, telephone **LoCall 1890 777 121**.



What are my rights as a tenant?

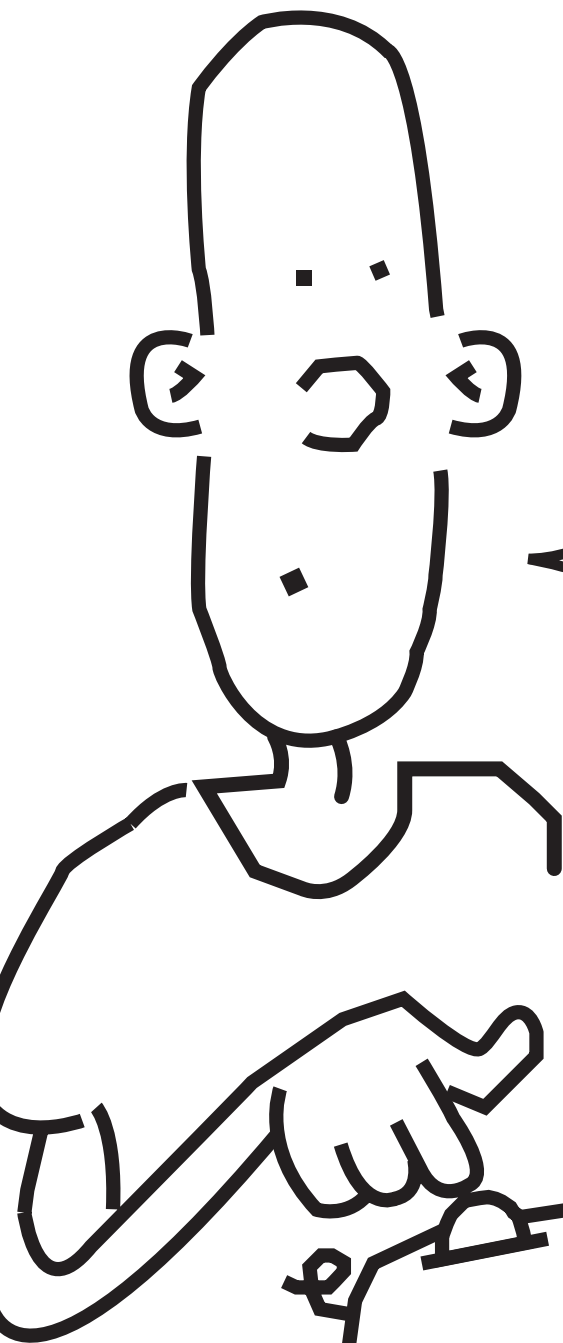
You have a right to a **rent book**. It should include:

- your name **and** the address of your flat,
- the name and address of the landlord **or** their agent,
- the term of your tenancy (for example, one year), **and**
- the amount of your rent.

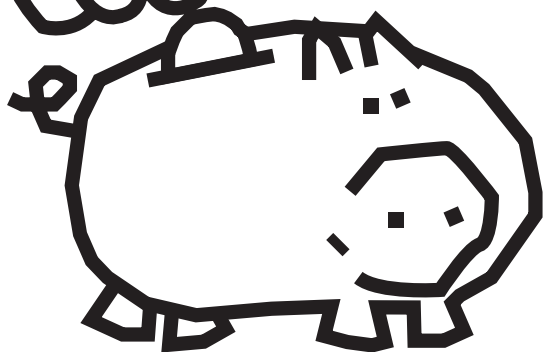
Your **landlord** should ensure that your flat:

- is in good repair,
- has hot and cold water,
- has adequate heating and ventilation,
- has wiring and gas pipes that are in good repair, **and**
- is free from damp.

For more information about **your rights** in rented accommodation, telephone **LoCall 1890 777 121**.



How do
I manage
my bills ?



MANAGING YOUR MONEY

How do I manage my bills?

Different organisations and schemes can help you manage your money. Some of these include:

- MABS – Money Advice and Budgeting Service,
- Household Budget Scheme, **and**
- FISC – Financial Information Services Centres.

MABS – the Money Advice and Budgeting Service

MABS are there to help you with money problems. If you can't cope with bills they can help you plan how to budget your money. To find out where your local MABS office is located telephone **LoCall 1890 777 121**.

Household Budget Scheme

If you are getting **certain** social welfare payments you can also use the Household Budget Scheme, which is operated by An Post. The scheme allows you to pay a regular amount towards various household bills by direct deductions from your payments.

You can pay the following bills this way:

- electricity (ESB),
- gas (Bord Gáis),
- telephone (Eircom), **and**
- rent or mortgages with some local authorities.

To find out more, telephone **LoCall 1800 70 71 72** or write to:

Household Budget

PostTS, GPO, O'Connell Street, FREEPOST, Dublin 1.

FISC – Financial Information Services Centres

FISC can offer confidential advice on money matters, including tax, social welfare and debt. They have a number of offices around the country.

To find your local FISC, telephone **(01) 637 7361**.

Where can I put my money?

You can put your money in an account in the:

- post office,
- credit union, or
- bank

Post office

To open a post office account, simply ask for an application form. Fill it in and hand it in at the counter. You will need to be known personally to the staff at the post office, or else bring:

- **two forms of I.D.**, such as a current passport or driving licence, **and**
- proof of your address, such as a household bill.

Credit union

You must apply in writing to join the credit union and show evidence of your address or place of work. There is an entrance fee of €1.27 in most credit unions. To find your local credit union, telephone **(01) 614 6700**.

Bank

To open a bank account you need:

- **two forms of I.D.**, such as a current passport or driving licence, **and**
- proof of your address, such as a household bill.

Banks, post offices and credit unions usually accept the following types of I.D.:

- a Garda Síochána age **identification card**,
- a pension or **benefit book** from the Department of Social and Family Affairs,
- a recent original bank or building society **statement** addressed to you, **and**
- a recent **household bill** for electricity, telephone or gas, for example.

How can I make
the most of my
time in prison?



EDUCATION

WHILE YOU ARE IN PRISON

While in prison there are many courses you can do. Some may help you get a job when you are released. You can take part in others just to enjoy learning something new. Education courses in prison are run by the VEC for the area where the prison is located.


Nearly all prisons have a library. They are a useful source of information. If there is a **librarian** available in your prison, they can often help you find the information you need.

Can I get help with reading and writing?

Yes. Just ask your **Head Teacher** to arrange a class for you, or if your prison has a **librarian**, check with them.

I never did the Junior or Leaving Cert – can I study for it while I’m here?

Yes. While in prison you may study and sit for the public exams such as the Junior Cert or Leaving Cert. Ask your **Head Teacher** for information about this.



Remember, if you start any education course while in prison, you can continue it outside.

What about a degree – can I start to study for it while I’m here?

If you want to find out about a **third level** course check with your **Head Teacher**. Sometimes it is possible to take an Open University course.

I don’t really want to study – is there anything else I could do while I’m here?

There are lots of practical courses you may be able to do. Ask your **Head Teacher** for more information.

Can I find out about courses to do when I get out?

To find out about courses that you can do when you are released, talk to your **Head Teacher** or check with your **Probation and Welfare Officer**.

AFTER YOU LEAVE

I’ve started a course – can I finish it when I get out?

Yes. If you’ve started a course while you’re in prison you can continue it when you get out. Speak to your **Probation and Welfare Officer**, your **Guidance Counsellor** or **Head Teacher** and they will put you in touch with the **Adult Education Officer** in the VEC.

Will an employer be able to tell if I did my course in prison?

No. The certificate you get from the VEC will not say where you did your study or where you sat your exams.

If I keep studying when I get out, can I get my social welfare payment?

You may qualify for the **Back to Education Allowance** from the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Time spent in prison counts towards the qualifying period for this payment.

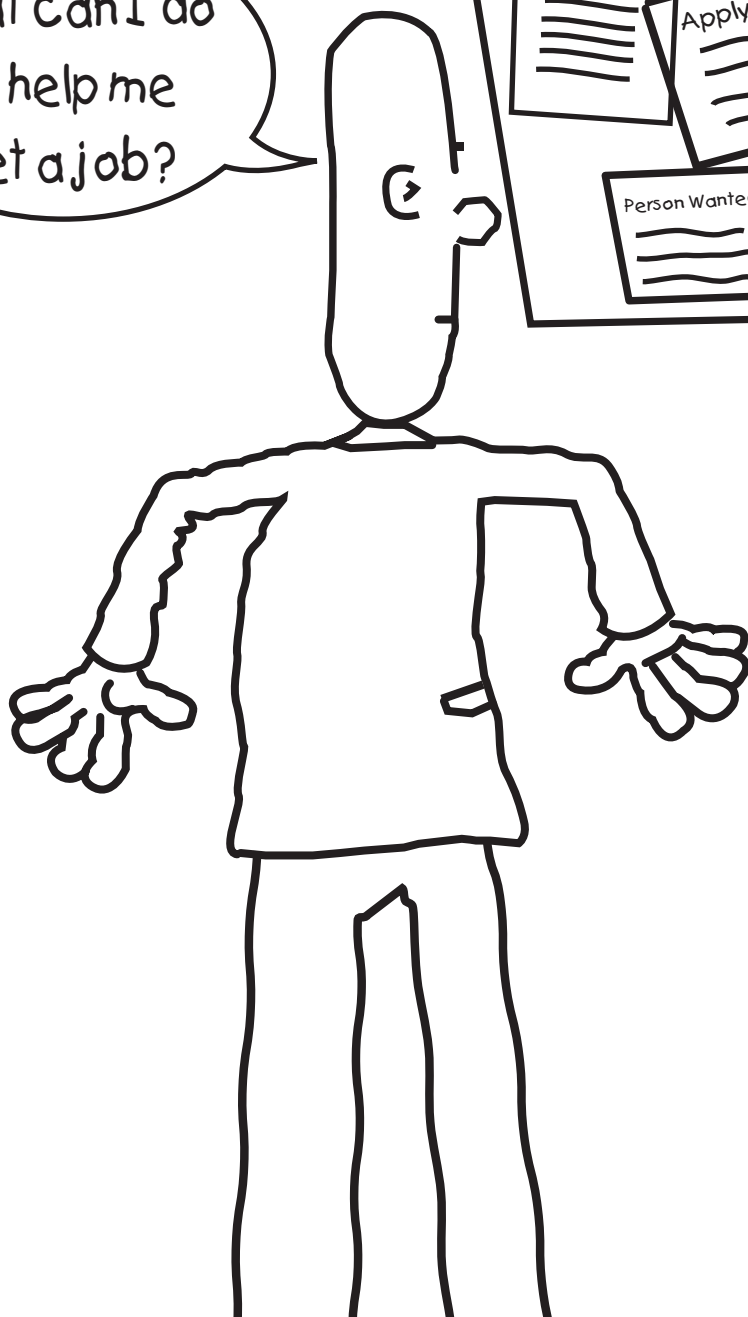
For more information, contact the **Facilitator** in your local Social Welfare Office. To find out where your local office is, telephone the Department of Social and Family Affairs at **(01) 704 3000** and ask for Information Services.

Note

You can visit your local **public library**, where you will find many free services for studying at your own pace. You can learn a language or learn computer skills and how to search the Internet. You can also attend talks on a wide range of topics. All public libraries have **free Internet access**.



What can I do
to help me
get a job?





WORK AND TRAINING

WHILE YOU ARE IN PRISON

In prison, many work and training activities are aimed at helping you prepare for when you leave. Ask your **Unit Officer** about these or see your local in-house booklet for details.

Work in prison is often arranged so that you can get the training you need, which may help you get a job later.

Even if a course is not job-related, potential employers are often more impressed by people who have used their free time doing something useful.

Can I work or do training while I'm in prison?

You will be interviewed for a **work placement** shortly after you enter prison. If you were doing an apprenticeship or training before entering, you may be able to continue it in prison.

Training is paced to suit your needs and is similar to FÁS and Fáilte Ireland (last known as CERT) training courses.

In certain cases, usually towards the end of a long sentence, you may be released during the day to attend follow-up courses in FÁS or Fáilte Ireland.

Contact the **Governor** or **Probation and Welfare Service** in your prison for more details.

What can I do in prison to help me get a job when I get out?

One step is to contact FÁS, the National Training and Employment Authority. Their **Employment Service Officers** may visit some prisons and give a general talk to you and other prisoners about employment and training options that FÁS provides.

Contact the **Probation and Welfare Service** or your **Head Teacher** for more information.

AFTER YOU LEAVE

What supports can I get when I leave prison?

There are over 70 community-based projects that can help you with:

- accommodation,
- training,
- employment,
- addiction treatment, and
- specialised services for ex-offenders.

These projects are funded by the **Probation and Welfare Service**. There are also many **other** valuable projects available that can provide you with similar help.

Talk to your **Probation and Welfare Officer** about these projects while you are in prison. **Probation and Welfare Officers** are available in **all** prisons and places of detention.

When you are **released**, the **Probation and Welfare Service** provide a **day duty** service Monday to Friday during working hours to advise and help you. You can contact the **Probation and Welfare Service** on **(01) 817 3600** or e-mail **info@pws.gov.ie**.

Their address is:

Smithfield Chambers
Smithfield
Dublin 7

You may contact the offices of the **Probation and Welfare Service** throughout the country for advice and referral whether or not you are being supervised.

Is there any other help available?

The **Linkage Programme** is a partnership between **Business in the Community Ireland** and the **Probation and Welfare Service**. This programme helps to place ex-offenders in employment, training and education.

The Linkage Programme **Training and Employment Officers (TEOs)** will help you decide on a job and match you to the job market. They will also help you in finding training or education suitable to your needs.

The **TEOs** can arrange and prepare you for interviews and, if you are placed in a job or further education, they will provide you with ongoing support, if you want it.

How do I get in touch with the Linkage Programme?

If you want to contact the **Linkage Programme** you should ask the **Probation and Welfare Service** who can put you in touch with one of their **Training and Employment Officers**. You can make enquiries about services in your area by telephoning or writing to:

The Linkage Programme,
Business in the Community Ireland,
32 Lower O'Connell Street,
Dublin 1.

Telephone: (01) 874 7232.

Where can I get more information?

If you are looking for employment or further training opportunities, register with FÁS at your local FÁS office or the Local Employment Service Office (LES - OBAIR) where you will get help to find suitable employment or training.

Your local **public library** will also be able to help you find information on careers, interview skills and writing up your CV.



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LOOKING FOR WORK

There are different ways you can get help to find work and training suited to you. Support is available from:

- FÁS,
- the Local Employment Service, and
- Department of Social and Family Affairs Facilitators.

What is FÁS?

FÁS is the National Training and Employment Authority.

What is the Local Employment Service (LES)?

The LES is an employment service to help people access jobs.

What can FÁS or the LES do for me?

If you are looking for a job or for training, **register** with your local FÁS or Local Employment Service (LES) office.

FÁS and the LES provide a **guidance** and **mediation** service. They will give you **advice** on training opportunities and job options most suitable to your needs.

How do I contact FÁS?

Call into your local FÁS office or LES office and ask to meet with the **Employment Service Officer**.

Any Social Welfare Office or Citizens Information Centre will tell you where to find your nearest FÁS office. You can also telephone **LoCall 1890 777 121**.

You can also get more information by telephoning your local FÁS office or emailing them at info@fas.ie. The FÁS website is **www.fas.ie**.

How do I contact the LES?

The LES offices are contact points where you can get information. They have signs outside with the words 'OBAIR Local Employment Services'. To find out where your nearest LES is, telephone **LoCall 1890 777 121**.

SOCIAL WELFARE FACILITATOR

The **Facilitator** in your local Social Welfare Office can help you. They know about the jobs that are available in your area. They can also tell you about the **Back to Work Allowance** and the **Back to Work Enterprise Allowance**. Time spent in prison counts towards the qualifying period for these payments.

Every Social Welfare Office has a **Facilitator**, whom you should make an appointment to meet. To find out where your local social welfare office is, telephone the Department of Social and Family Affairs on (01) 704 3000 and ask for Information Services.

Do I have to disclose my prison record when looking for a job?

In certain cases, you may have to disclose your record. Ask your **Probation and Welfare Officer** to check this out for you.

Even if the law doesn't require you to tell potential employers that you have spent time in prison, it is generally a good idea to do so – it's better for an employer to get the information from you rather than from somebody else.

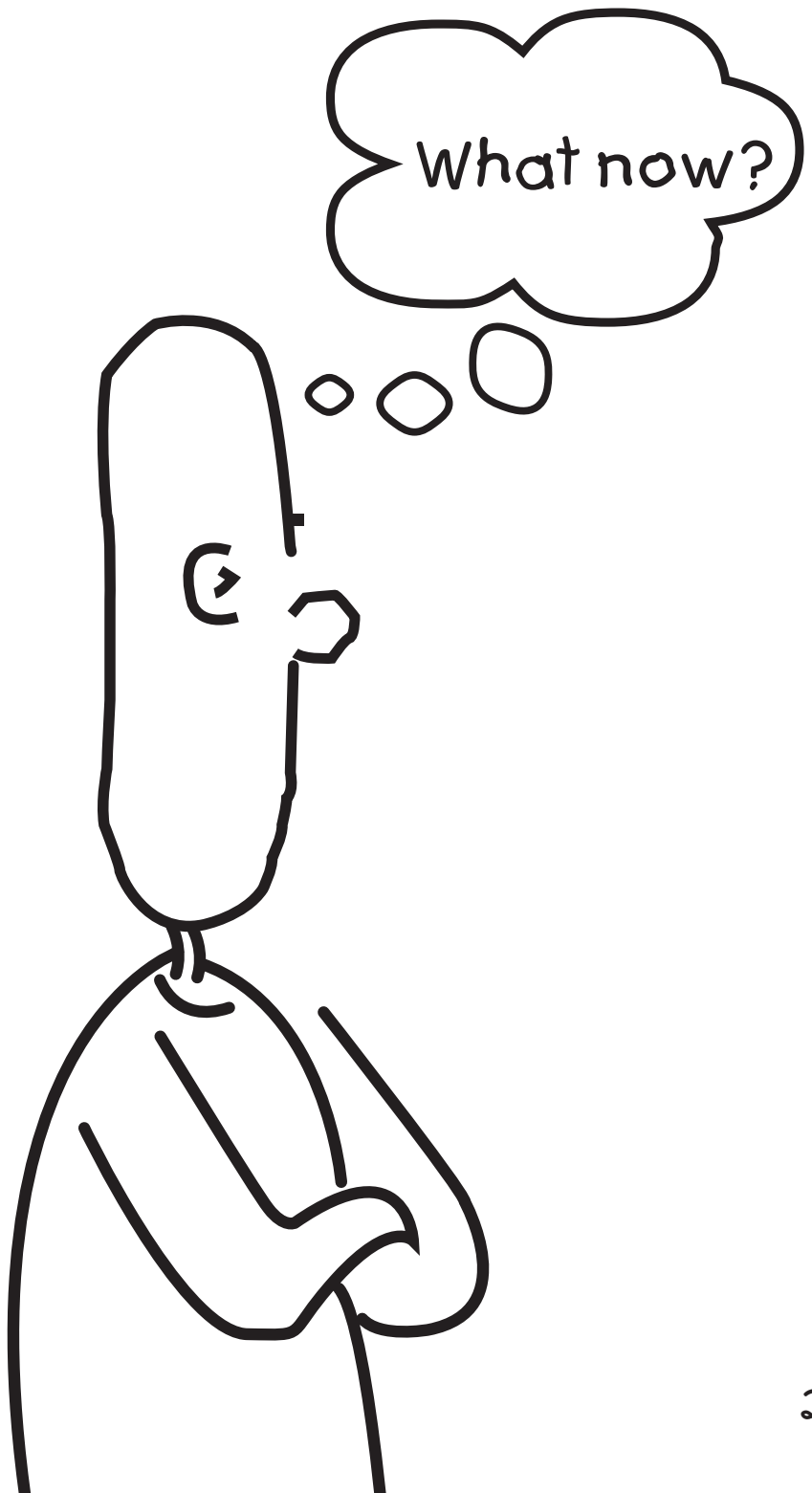
If you need to give your work history in an application form, you can put 'unavailable for work at that time' and explain why in a separate letter.

To help you present your prison record in a positive way, talk to the **Probation and Welfare Officer** or ask them to put you in touch with one of the many community-based projects that are there to help you.

Many ex-prisoners have jobs. You'd be surprised — having a prison record doesn't automatically mean you won't get a job.

UNION MEMBERSHIP

Remember, whether you choose a training position or obtain employment, you can run into problems. **Unions** can assist you with practical help, support and advice and you are entitled to join a union.





HEALTH MATTERS

WHILE YOU ARE IN PRISON

If you have health problems, you should check with your prison **Governor** to see what services you may use. Services may include:

- dental care,
- addiction treatment,
- treatment for depression or mental health problems, and
- general medical care.

AFTER YOU LEAVE

What can I do about healthcare when I'm released?

If you know when you will be released, you can arrange to be referred to services outside prison to continue your treatment. Ask the **prison doctor** to refer you to a **local doctor**.

MEDICAL CARD

If you have an income below a certain level or if your only income is a social welfare payment, you may be able to get a medical card. If you are a medical card-holder you can visit the doctor free of charge. You can also get prescribed drugs, hospital services and dental and optical services free of charge. Everyone aged 70 and over can get a medical card, regardless of income.

You can get the medical card income guidelines from your nearest health board. You can also get them by telephoning **LoCall 1890 777 121** or by contacting your **Community Welfare Officer**.

Why do I need a medical card?

A medical card means you don't have to pay for visits to the doctor or for prescription drugs, hospital or dental care.

When should I apply for a medical card?

Don't wait until you are sick – apply as soon as possible.

To apply, you must use an application form, which you can get from your local health centre. You must then either:

- get the **form stamped** at your local Social Welfare Office, if you are claiming a social welfare payment or
- have it **signed by an employer**, if you are employed.

You will get a list of doctors to choose from and you will need to get your doctor to sign your application form.

To find your nearest local health centre, telephone **LoCall 1890 777 121**.

What if I don't get a medical card?

If you don't get a medical card you will have to **pay for visits to the doctor** and for other medical care.

What if the doctor gives me a prescription?



If you need **prescription drugs** and you don't have a medical card, you will have to pay for the first €78 in each month. You won't have to pay more than this if you register for the **Drugs Payment Scheme** – your local chemist can help you do this. If a doctor gives you a prescription for methadone, as part of a treatment programme, the chemist will not charge you for it.

Is there a charge for hospital care?

Yes. There is a fee of €45 if you go to the **hospital accident and emergency** department unless you have a medical card or your doctor sends you there. If you need to stay in hospital it costs €45 a day unless you have a medical card. The most you will have to pay in one year is usually €450.

MEDICAL CARE

Health boards are responsible for providing healthcare services for everyone in the Republic of Ireland.

PUBLIC HEALTHCARE

Everyone is entitled to public in-patient and out-patient services regardless of their income. You have a right to a bed in a public ward and consultant services and to out-patient services in a public hospital as long as you choose public healthcare. There may be certain charges for some people for these services.

PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

If you do not choose public care and take private treatment instead, you or your health insurance company will have to pay the full price for the services you use.

A number of companies offer voluntary private health insurance in Ireland. The Voluntary Health Insurance Board (VHI) is the largest provider of these services and BUPA is the second largest provider.

Generally, you must join before you reach the age of 65. The level of cover available and the rates charged vary from one company to another.

HEALTH PROBLEMS

What can I do if I think I might have a sexually transmitted infection?

Most sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are **easily-treated** and cured. But, it is important to get treatment **early**. You can also get some STIs, for example HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C, by sharing needles..

There is a **free helpline** that can give you more information about STIs or tell you where you can go to be tested or to receive treatment. Call the HIV/ Drugs Helpline on **Freephone 1800 459 459**.

Where can I get help for drink or drug addiction?

The health boards have programmes to treat addiction. Visit your doctor to find out about the different options and get help and advice.

If you are a drug user you can use a number of services to help you with addiction, such as:

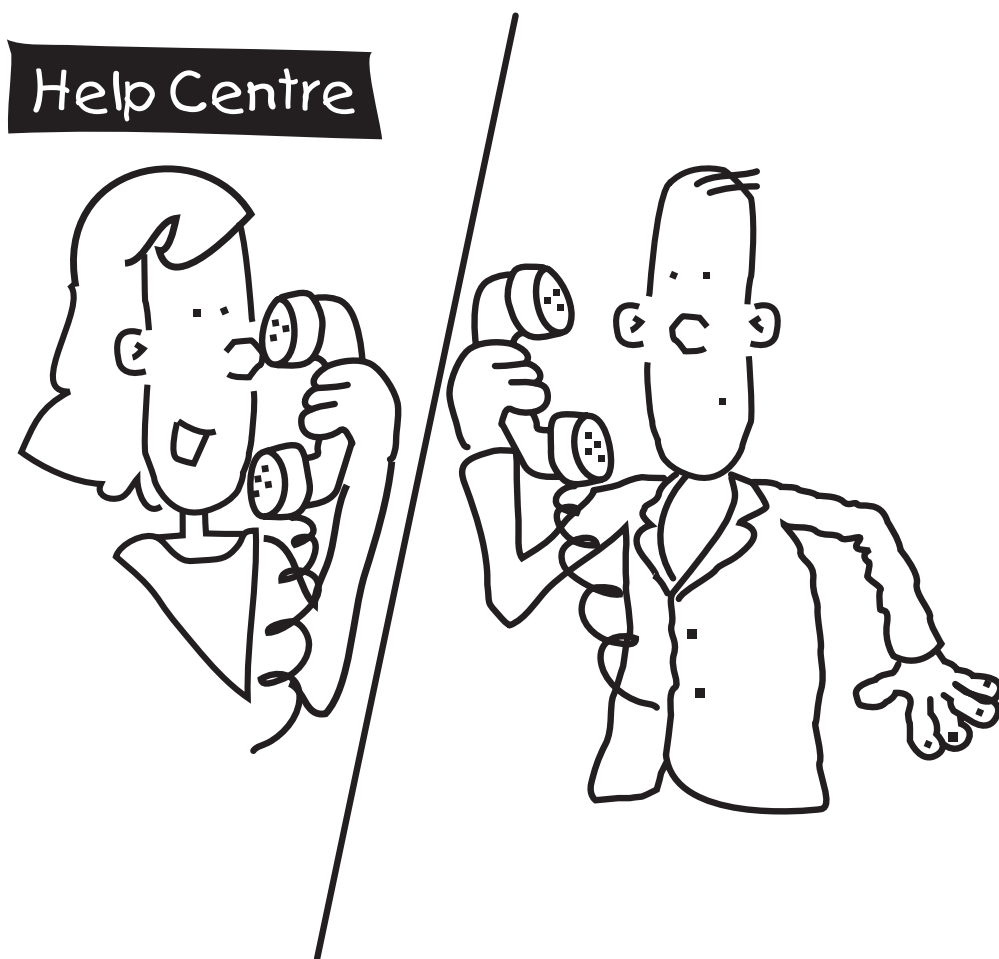
- needle exchange,
- methadone maintenance,
- counselling, and
- residential treatment.

For advice and information on services in your area, phone the HIV/Drugs Helpline on **Freephone 1800 459 459**.

I don't think I can cope without support – who can I talk to?

There are lots of counselling services available throughout the country. Your **doctor** can refer you to the services in your area.

You can also telephone **LoCall 1890 777 121** and they will tell you what services are available in your area.





How do I get a solicitor?

LEGAL MATTERS

WHILE YOU ARE IN PRISON

Your local **in-house information booklet** outlines your **legal rights**. If you need to appear in court, a solicitor will usually represent you.

In most prisons you can borrow law books through the prison library. Ask to see the law catalogue in the prison library. The **library officer** or **librarian** can help you.

AFTER YOU LEAVE

How do I get a solicitor?

Contact information for solicitors throughout Ireland is listed in the Golden Pages. If you cannot afford a solicitor, you may qualify for legal aid from the **Legal Aid Board**, which will provide you with a solicitor if you need one.

LEGAL AID

When can I get legal aid?

You may get legal advice or legal aid for civil cases, such as judicial separations, from various law centres set up by the **Legal Aid Board**. To qualify, your income must be below a certain level. You will usually have to pay a contribution towards the costs. You can get more information from:

Legal Aid Board

Quay Street
Cahirciveen
Co. Kerry

Telephone: LoCall 1890 615 200

You may get legal aid for criminal cases by applying to the court.

Is there anywhere else I can get help?

FLAC – Free Legal Advice Centres – is a voluntary group that may, in certain cases, give legal advice. Check with Citizens Information Centres on **LoCall 1890 777 121** for details of where you can find your nearest FLAC centre. You can also contact FLAC directly at:

Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC)
13 Lower Dorset Street
Dublin 1

Telephone: (01) 874 5690

CHILD CUSTODY

Where can I go to find out about custody of my children?

If you and your partner have separated and they are willing, one option is to attend the **Family Mediation Service**. The service, which is free, will provide a mediator who will work with both of you to make arrangements about seeing your children. The **mediator** can also help you draw up an agreement on any issues regarding your separation.

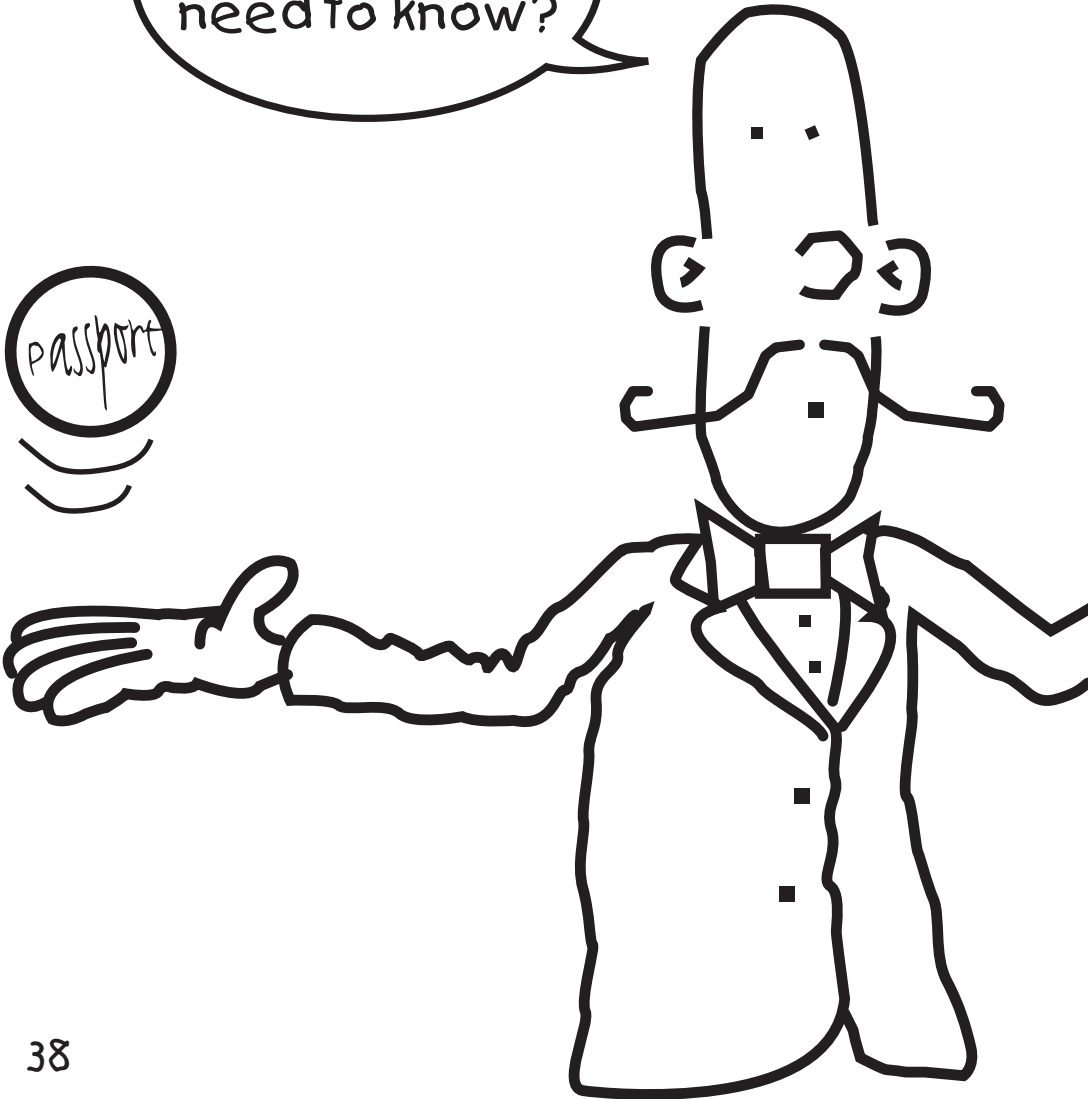
Contact the **Family Mediation Service** at **(01) 634 4320** and they will tell you where to find the office nearest to you.

If you and your partner cannot decide who can have custody of your children, the **court** will decide. When the court is making its decision, the most important factor is the **welfare of the child**. When applying for custody of your child or seeking an access order you should get **legal advice** or **representation**.

pps Mrs.

What else do I
need to know?

passport





USEFUL THINGS TO KNOW

BIRTH CERTIFICATE

A Birth Certificate is a useful form of identification and you may need it to apply for a social welfare payment. You will also need it for many dealings with Government departments.



If you do not have a Birth Certificate you can apply for one shortly before you leave prison.



You can **apply** by post to the Registrar of Births **or** ask a relative or friend to apply for one for you. The appropriate Registrar of Births is determined by where you are born.

You need to give:

- your full name,
- the date and place you were born, **and**
- both your parents' names (if possible).

There is a **fee** for the Birth Certificate, so you will also need to include a cheque or postal order when you apply. You can arrange a cheque or postal order through the Prison Office.

The fee is reduced if you need a Birth Certificate to apply for a social welfare payment. Check with your Probation and Welfare Officer for more information.

For more information, contact:

General Register Office

Joyce House
8-11 Lombard Street
Dublin 2

Telephone: (01) 635 4000

CERTIFICATE OF IMPRISONMENT

You can apply to the **Governor** in your prison for a certificate of imprisonment. You get the certificate directly on release, or it can be issued to an organisation outside the prison for you. You will need the certificate when applying for social welfare payments, among other things. See the in-house information booklet in your prison for further details.

TEMPORARY RELEASE PAPERS

You get a temporary release form if you are released before your normal remission date. This form will contain all the conditions that apply to your temporary release. You can use this form as proof of release to any relevant organisation outside the prison. You will also need it when applying for social welfare payments.

DRUGS PAYMENT SCHEME

If you have a medical card you do not need to apply for the Drugs Payment Scheme.

The **Drugs Payment Scheme** means that you and your family will **not have to pay** more than **€78** for prescription drugs or medicines in any one **month**. You, your spouse or partner and any children under 18 (or under 23 if in full-time education) are regarded as a family for this scheme.

To apply, get an **application form** from any chemist or your local health board. Send your completed application form to your local health board office.

Your health board will then **send** you a plastic **swipe card** for each person named on the registration form. You should present this card whenever you are having prescriptions filled.

MEANS TEST

In a means test, you give details of your means to an official from the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Your **means** are:

- any income you or your spouse or partner have,
- the value of any property (except your family home), and
- the value of any assets that could provide you with an income.

The total value of your means indicates what amount of social welfare payment you can claim. The higher your means, the lower the amount of social welfare payment.

For some payments, such as Unemployment Assistance, the Department of Social and Family Affairs may also consider the value of free board and lodging as means.

PASSPORT

Besides being essential for travelling abroad, a passport is also a useful form of photo I.D. For example, you may have to provide it to open a bank account.

Any Irish citizen is **entitled** to apply for a passport and be granted one, subject to a few conditions.

On your release from prison, unless there is a court order restricting this, you may get a new passport when you apply for it. A prison record does not stop someone from holding a passport.

Passport **application forms** are available from all **Garda stations** and from post offices that provide the Passport Express Service.

In special circumstances, **with the approval of the prison Governor**, you may apply for a passport shortly before you are due to be released.

PPS NUMBER (PPS NO.)

Your **PPS No.** is your Personal Public Service Number. It used to be called an **RSI** number. You will need this for a lot of public services and to apply for social welfare payments.

You can find your PPS No. on your:

- **social services card**, which you get when you 'sign on' for unemployment payment, social welfare pension or payment books,
- **P60** (from your employer),
- **P45** (from your employer),
- **payslips** from your employer, **and**
- **Drugs Payment Scheme Card.**

If you do not already have a PPS No., go to your nearest local **Social Welfare Office**, where an Officer will help you to get one.

You should bring:

- the long version of your **Birth Certificate**
and
- evidence such as a bill or a bank statement, that you are living at **your address**.

P60

This is a certificate of pay, tax and Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) given to all employees by their employer at the end of each tax year. It states:

- your PPS No.,
- how much you earned,
- how much tax you paid,
- how much PRSI you paid,
- how much PRSI your employer paid, and
- the number of weeks you were in insurable employment.

P45

This is a document stating the amount of pay, tax and PRSI given to an employee by their employer when the employment ends. It states:

- your PPS No.,
- how much you earned,
- how much tax you paid,
- how much PRSI you paid,
- how much PRSI your employer paid, and
- the number of weeks you were in insurable employment.

SOCIAL SERVICES CARD

You will mainly need your social services card if you are getting your social welfare paid to you at the post office.

The following details are on the front of the card:

- your name,
- PPS Number, and
- the issue date.

You can request a social services card at your local Social Welfare Office by providing your PPS Number and proof of your identity.

YOUR LOCAL CONTACT NUMBERS

Why not fill in the missing numbers before you leave prison?
They may be useful when you are released.

| Name | Telephone number |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Citizens Information Phone Service | 1890 777 121 |
| Local Social Welfare Office | _____ |
| Community Welfare Officer (CWO) | _____ |
| Probation & Welfare Service | _____ |
| Duty Social Worker | _____ |
| Emergency Housing | _____ |
| Local Authority | _____ |
| Housing Officer | _____ |
| MABS | _____ |
| Household Budget Scheme | 1800 707 172 |
| FISC | (01) 637 7361 |
| VEC | _____ |
| FÁS | _____ |
| LES | _____ |
| Doctor | _____ |
| Dentist | _____ |
| Electricity – ESB | _____ |
| GAS – Bord Gais | _____ |
| Other heating | _____ |
| Library | _____ |
| | _____ |
| Other useful numbers | _____ |

FAMILY AND FRIENDS' TELEPHONE NUMBERS

[illegible]

USEFUL NOTES

PPS NO.





*This booklet was produced as a result
of an NESF recommendation.*

**This booklet is also available in PDF
format on the Department of Social
and Family Affairs website,**

www.welfare.ie

You can get other useful information from

www.oasis.gov.ie



Department of
Social & Family Affairs