

Policy name: Prison Retail Policy Framework

Issue Date: 30 July 2026

Implementation Date: 04.01.2027

Replaces the following documents (e.g. PSIs, PSOs, Custodial Service Specs) which are hereby cancelled:

- PSI 23/2013: Prisoner Retail
- Prisoner Retail Specification 2015- 10-15

Introduces amendments to the following documents: N/A

Action required by:

x	HMPPS HQ	x	Governors
x	Public Sector Prisons	x	Heads of Group
x	Contracted Prisons		The Probation Service
x	Under 18 Young Offender Institutions		Other providers of Probation and Community Services
	HMPPS Rehabilitation Contract Services Team		

Mandatory Actions:

- All groups referenced above must adhere to the Requirements section of this Policy Framework, which contains all mandatory actions. Governors must ensure that any new local policies that they develop because of this Policy Framework are compliant with relevant legislation, including the Prison Rules 1999 and the Public-Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act, 2010).
- All Public Sector Prisons and specified Privately Managed Prisons must use the retail service provided through the approved Supplier(s). Other Privately Managed Prisons may choose to operate a different model, but where they use the HMPPS contracted service, they must comply with the same principles, including on pricing.

For Information:

- This policy replaces PSI 23-2013 Prisoner Retail. There are no major changes in the requirements to deliver an effective retail service.
- By the implementation date, Governors of Public Sector Prisons and Directors of Privately Managed Prisons must ensure that their local procedures do not contain any instructions that contradict this Policy Framework.

- In this document the term 'Governor' also applies to Directors of Privately Managed Prisons
- This Policy Framework applies to Youth Custody Service (YCS), where relevant adjustments may be required, including the use of appropriate language and developmentally appropriate decision-making.
- The retail service can include a variety of operating models (e.g. externally supplied goods or prison shops).

How will this Policy Framework be audited or monitored:

- HMIP/IMB: Scrutiny bodies will conduct regular inspections/monitoring visits, which may include aspects of the retail ("canteen") service.
- The Performance, Assurance, Risk Group (PAR) conducts periodic reviews of prison operations and data returns. This includes retail delivery, in particular security audits.
- HMPPS Directorate of Contracted Operational Delivery will be responsible for the monitoring and response to the delivery of the retail services in accordance with the contract.

Resource Impact:

- No additional resource is anticipated as being required because of the introduction of this Policy Framework.

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Approved by OPS for publication: Helen Judge, Chair, Operational Policy Sub-board, xx June 2026

Revisions

Date	Nature of Change
06/08/2026	Added hyperlinks to relevant legislation, policy documents and supporting evidence for ease of reference. No change to policy intent or mandatory requirements.

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 Prison retail is a service that aims to effectively and safely enable people in custody to purchase permitted non-essential goods, using their personal money or income earned from participating in prisoner employment. Providing prisoners with the ability to purchase additional products using their own funds supports personal choice, promotes a degree of normality consistent with life outside custody, and facilitates maintaining family and social connections. It helps to ensure prisoners are treated decently, which supports the stability and safety of the regime.
- 1.2 The retail service refers to:
- “Canteen”, where prisoners may purchase goods from a list selected by their prison’s management team (the “**Local Product List**” or “**LPL**”) from a wider list compiled nationally (the “**National Product List**” or “**NPL**”).
 - “Special Orders” (e.g. via Catalogue Government Procurement Card (GPC)), where prisoners may request to purchase bespoke goods not included on the NPL/LPL, subject to the local approval and GPC spend rules. Any relevant legislation, regulations and national policies must also be considered to ensure compliance e.g. Health and Safety regulations.
- 1.3 This Policy Framework supports HMPPS and MoJ objectives by:
- Promoting fairness, decency and equality including under the Public Sector Equality Duty;
 - Supporting rehabilitation through purposeful retail work and skills development; and
 - Promoting healthy choices as part of wider wellbeing and health strategies.

2. Legislation and Evidence

- 2.1 This Policy Framework and its guidance are informed by statutory requirements, operational evidence, inspection findings and stakeholder engagement, including but not limited to:
- [Prison Rules 1999](#);
 - [Public Sector Equality Duty](#);
 - Smoyer (2014): Foodways and construction of identity in women’s prison.
 - The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice 53;
 - Morley B, Leach B, and Tammam J (2020) Food available to people in prison from the prison shop: Comparison to dietary guideline. Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics 33;
 - Tammam J, Gillam L, Gesch B, and Stein J (2012) Prisons and Health: Availability of junk food should be reduced. British Medical Journal 345.
- 2.2 Evidence shows that the retail service is an essential part of daily prison life and impacts key areas such as decency, safety and equality. It can support budgeting and planning skills. It can also contribute to wellbeing and rehabilitation by providing structured work opportunities where there are internal retail related workplaces.

3. Outcomes

Prison Governors are accountable for delivering and monitoring the following outcomes:

3.1 Prisoner Access to Retail Services

- 3.1.1 Prisoners can spend their earnings and private cash transferred into their spend account in order to purchase non-essential items for personal use.
- 3.1.2 Prisoners can access a range of non-essential reception items within 24hrs of arrival.
- 3.1.3 Prisoners can reliably access permitted non-essential goods at least weekly, through a consistent, transparent, and fair process.

3.2 Fair Pricing and Transparency

- 3.2.1 Selling prices for goods at the National Products List ("Canteen") are set nationally at the Recommended Retail Price (RRP). If circumstances allow, prices may be set lower by HMPPS, but they shall not be set higher than the RRP.
- 3.2.2 Pricing and product lists are standardised and clearly accessible, supporting transparency.
- 3.2.3 Pricing and product lists for special orders purchases are set and managed locally based on the specific providers, following government procurement card guidelines.

3.3 Equality, Inclusion and Accessibility

- 3.3.1 The retail service meets diverse needs and complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty. A selection of products for people with protected characteristics are made available to prisoners and reviewed regularly.
- 3.3.2 Ordering systems are accessible by all prisoners, including those with language barriers, disabilities, or low literacy, supported by assisted ordering and alternative formats.

3.4 Safety, Security and Good Order

- 3.4.1 The retail service operates in a way that supports prison safety and security, including through proportionate volumetric controls and in line with local risk assessments.
- 3.4.2 Access to the retail service supports good order and discipline, aligning with local incentives schemes.

3.5 Rehabilitation and Purposeful Activity

- 3.5.1 The retail service contributes to rehabilitation by providing structured work opportunities in and out of prison, where appropriate.

3.6 Ordering and Delivery/Sale

- 3.6.1 Failures such as delays, missing items, or refund backlogs are minimised and dealt with at the earliest reasonable opportunity, in line with contractual arrangements.

- 3.6.2 Prison staff follow the agreed complaints process to ensure complaints are handled fairly and promptly.

3.7 Health and Wellbeing

- 3.7.1 The retail service supports wider wellbeing strategies by encouraging healthy choices where feasible, while allowing for autonomy and diversity of needs. Prisoners can purchase items of their choice that prisons do not provide, including options for lower-sugar, lower-salt snacks and additional fresh produce. This provision respects prisoner choice and aligns with national health guidance, contributing to better physical and mental health outcomes.

4. Requirements

Prison Governor must ensure the following requirements are met:

4.1 Governance and Accountability

- 4.1.1 Appoint a Retail Liaison Contact (RLC) and suitable deputies who promotes compliance with this Framework and any relevant guidance.
- 4.1.2 Items on the NPL (or their equivalents, e.g. different colour or size) are not procured via other routes, including special orders.
- 4.1.3 Unapproved channels (e.g., illicit economy through informal prisoner-run wing shops) are not operated.
- 4.1.4 Ensure compliance with all retail contractual obligations set out in the relevant documents.
- 4.1.5 Ensure compliance with finance and other relevant policies/ legislation for any other local retail-based activities. This includes goods purchased in bulk for resale which are stocked by the prison and not ordered as a single item upon prisoner request. Please see the *Constraints* section for more information.

4.2 Delivery, Access and Timeliness

- 4.2.1 Provide at least weekly access to prisoner retail via canteen.
- 4.2.2 Ensure compliance with adjudications awards and Incentives based spend/items range limits.
- 4.2.3 Ensure that orders are processed and delivered as per the contractually agreed schedule and procedures.
- 4.2.4 Ensure prison staff supervise the access to retail orders, to ensure that prisoners receive items safely and bullying is not taking place at point of service.
- 4.2.5 Supply goods only up to the prisoner's available spends value and any relevant caps on permitted expenditure.
- 4.2.6 Ensure that prisoner accounts are updated promptly.

4.3 Early Days and Reception

- 4.3.1 Provide first retail offer within 24 hours of the arrival of the prisoner into the prison, using national and local reception item options; store securely and account for stock, with prisoners charged as per local arrangements allowing for gradual recuperation of funds. Ensure prisoners are made aware they will be charged and how.
- 4.3.2 Ensure prisoners have access to canteen items promptly after their first reception canteen to reduce the risk of debt.
- 4.3.3 Provide clear induction information on access, pricing, refunds, and complaints routes in relation to canteen and special orders/other routes.

4.4 Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility

- 4.4.1 Review the Local Product List regularly and in line with the product review process to meet cohort needs. Items can be suspended or new items added immediately, where agreed with the Supplier(s) and in line with the guidance from the national HMPPS functions.
- 4.4.2 Complete the local Equality Impact Assessments for the retail delivery.
- 4.4.3 Provide alternative-language ordering materials and assisted support where required.

4.5 Retail pricing

- 4.5.1 Canteen prices are set within national limits and must not change locally.
- 4.5.2 Prices must be at or below Recommended Retail Price (RRP) or an evidenced equivalent where no RRP exists.
- 4.5.3 Prices may be updated at any time in response to changes outside of HMPPS control that impact the cost price or the RRP of the products on sale.
- 4.5.4 Statutory price increases, for example due to duty or tax changes, are made effective to prisoners at the same time as they impact the general public, or as close to this as is practically possible.
- 4.5.5 Sites are allowed to introduce reasonable local weekly spending limits to manage orders effectively.
- 4.5.6 Sites must comply with nationally-set maximum item limits and ensure these are communicated clearly.

4.6 Refunds

4.6.1 Operate and enable efficient refunds.

- 4.6.2 Specify a clear process and timeframe. If prisoners are not content with the proposed solution when a retail complaint has been made, they can submit a prison COMP1 complaint form. The prison and/or Supplier(s) will then investigate and decide on the right action.
- 4.6.3 Refund the prisoner account, where a refund is deemed by internal checks to be the likely solution to any prisoner complaint, whilst continuing to investigate the issue with the

Supplier(s) where necessary. This is to avoid delays to refunds where the liability may rest with the Supplier(s).

4.7 Product Governance (NPL/LPL)

- 4.7.1 Set LPL in line with the Supplier(s) and HMPPS guidance, selecting items from the list of items available on NPL; ensuring that all the items chosen are compliant with national and local security restrictions, suitable for the regime and needs of the population.
- 4.7.2 Conduct at least quarterly LPL reviews including:
- Prisoner consultation (including protected groups).
 - Equality Impact Assessments.
 - Safety and healthcare input.
 - National and local security, health and safety, and regime restrictions
 - Storage and processing feasibility (e.g., chilled items only where appropriate refrigeration and food safety management exist).
 - Relevant feedback from external sources – e.g. HMIP/IMB reports.
- 4.7.3 Maintain a robust product request process; screen locally and submit requests for items to be added to the NPL (max 10 items per prison per quarter) via the Product Review Board with a documented rationale. Utilise the relevant form shared by the contract management team. The Product Review Board will review all requests in liaison with the Supplier(s) and adapt the NPL accordingly.
- 4.7.4 Ensure all vapes are purchased via the HMPPS retail contract, so as to ensure compliance with health and safety specifications. Other nationally mandated products may apply across the estate where specified in the relevant policy framework or HMPPS instructions/guidance.

4.8 Distribution

- 4.8.1 Ensure orders are distributed to prisoners by either Supplier(s) or prison service staff, depending on local arrangements, with appropriate manual handling aids where identified by local risk assessment.

4.9 Security and Illicit Economy Controls

- 4.9.1 Ensure prisoners are not given access to items that contravene security, volumetric controls, or [Incentives Policy Framework \(IPF\)](#) limitations.
- 4.9.2 National HMPPS teams, including Directorate of Contracted Operational Delivery, Policy, Directorate of Security, Health & Safety and National Safety teams, review all new NPL item requests, along with the establishments rationale. Items may be subject to suitability testing before inclusion on the NPL.
- 4.9.3 Establishments apply local security checks as per the Local Security Strategy before including items on their LPL.
- 4.9.4 Locally identified risks are reported via the contract management reporting process and to the Directorate of Security, as required; if approval is withheld, the product will be removed permanently from the NPL and replaced where possible.

- 4.9.5 External Supplier(s) staff not routinely operating in the prison are escorted and accompanied by prison staff throughout the process for the handover of goods.

4.10 Internal Retail workspaces (where applicable)

- 4.10.1 Maintain retail space security arrangements, including building integrity, tool equipment security, access/egress, utilities, pest control asset maintenance and replacement as well as food safety standards.
- 4.10.2 Select and supervise prisoner workers appropriately, implementing searching strategies and minimising theft risks in line with the Local Security Strategy.
- 4.10.3 Link pay to attendance, as per local pay policy; promote productivity and accuracy; provide opportunities for skills and qualifications, where appropriate.
- 4.10.4 Control bulk goods ownership; ensure storage and stock compliance with Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), where relevant.
- 4.10.5 Ensure training requirements of internal and external staff are met in line with the expectations set by the national HMPPS functions and task-based risk assessments are in place.

4.11 Special Orders

- 4.11.1 Special orders, including newspaper access, meet security, affordability, and timeliness principles; clear rules are set locally for ordering cut-offs, delivery/returns handling, and any fees or limits.
- 4.11.2 Special orders are the primary route for ordering items that core retail provision ("canteen") cannot procure, e.g. due to their niche, expensive or bulky nature.
- 4.11.3 The process must be managed to reduce excessive pressures on administrative staff. Proportionate, locally set limits on the number of orders, the number of providers or restrictions on the days on which orders may be placed, and other processes are put in place to aid overall effective delivery.
- 4.11.4 Items on the NPL (or equivalents) are not ordered via catalogue.
- 4.11.5 There is no general admin/transaction fee applied. Specific costs of any direct admin, delivery or return charges can be recovered through a locally set proportionate fee or through a direct add-on charge being applied to relevant orders.
- 4.11.7 Compliance with volumetric and in-possession restrictions is checked before ordering; update property records on receipt (see Prisoner's Property Policy Framework).
- 4.11.8 Newspapers and periodicals via local Supplier(s) agreements are comparable to community standards, age-appropriate, and non-discriminatory in line with local security restrictions. Maintain a visible local list.

4.12 Risk and Contingency

- 4.12.1 Maintain contingency plans for supply disruption using national guidance supplied by the Supplier(s) and/or HMPPS functions.

4.13 Communications and Transparency

- 4.13.1 Maintain up-to-date service notices on ordering cycles, delivery days, refund routes, inclusion offer, and assisted support in areas visible to prisoners.

5. Constraints

- 5.1 Any derogation from this Policy Framework should be considered on a case-by-case basis and will need to be justified and discussed with and authorised in advance (where possible) by the Retail Policy Team. Additional guidance may be shared directly with establishments, in collaboration with the Suppliers where appropriate.
- 5.2 The retail delivery must also align to and be consistent with all other MoJ/HMPPS policy documents, including:
- (a) [The Incentives Policy Framework](#), which sets out the parameters of what may be purchased by prisoners;
 - (b) [Prison Service Order 4460 \(Prisoners Pay\)](#), which sets out the pay structure for prisoners undertaking work activity.
 - (c) [The Prisoners' Property Policy Framework](#), which sets out the factors to be taken into account when considering applications for the purchase of bespoke goods by prisoners and the process to be followed in recording prisoner property in prisoner records.
 - (d) [PSI-75/2011 \(Residential Services\)](#), which sets out the property to be provided by prisons to meet the basic human needs of prisoners;
 - (e) [PSI-05/2016 \(Faith & Pastoral Care for Prisoners\)](#), which sets out prisoners' rights to have access to religious artefacts, including dress and headwear;
 - (f) [The Searching Policy Framework](#), which sets out arrangements for the searching of prisoner property and the seizure of any unauthorised items;
 - (g) [The Managing Conveyance of Unauthorised and Illicit Items Policy Framework](#). This policy sets out relevant List A, B and C items.
 - (h) [The Prison Safety Policy Framework](#);
 - (i) [PSI 06/2015 \(Managing Health and Safety\)](#), and
 - (j) [PSI 11-2015 \(Fire Safety in Prisons\)](#), Annex B & C.