



Ministry
of Justice



Changes to the way people leave prison

August 2026



Easy Read version

What is in this paper



Ministry
of Justice

Who we are

1



What this guide is about

3



1. Why we are changing the way we release prisoners

5



2. What is changing

7



3. What rules offenders will have to follow when they are released

12



4. How victims can get information about release dates 15



5. Support for victims 18

Who we are



Ministry
of Justice

We are the Ministry of Justice.



We are the part of the government that makes sure there is a good and fair criminal justice system in England and Wales.



We are a government department that looks after:

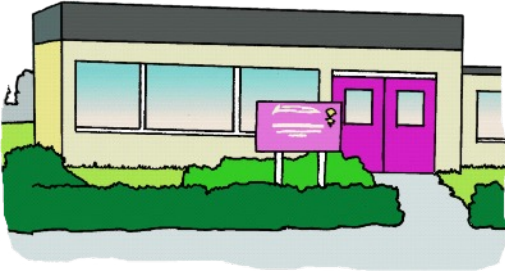
- courts



- prisons



- probation services



- attendance centres.

What this guide is about



This guide is for victims of crime.



It tells you about changes to the way we release some people from prison.



The guide explains:

1. Why we are changing the way we release some prisoners.



2. What is changing.



3. What rules offenders must follow when they are released.

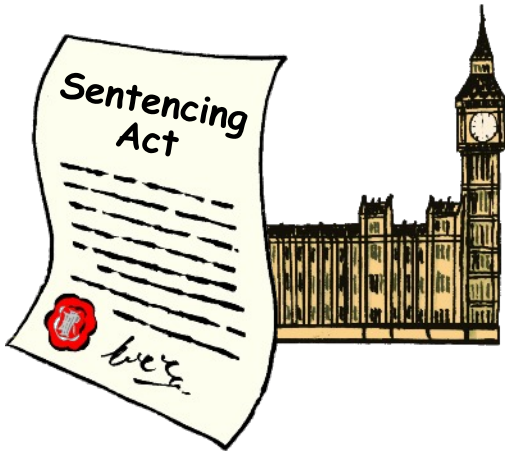


4. How victims can get information about release dates.



5. Where victims can get help.

1. Why we are changing the way we release prisoners



The government made a new law called the Sentencing Act.



This law lets us make changes to how we release some offenders from prison.



Our changes will:

- make sure there is enough space in prisons



- make sure released offenders are closely watched



- help keep victims and the public safe.

2. What is changing



The progression model

The changes to how prisoners are released is called the **progression model**.



We will use the progression model for prisoners who are serving a **fixed-term prison sentence**.

A **fixed-term sentence** has an end date and is split between:

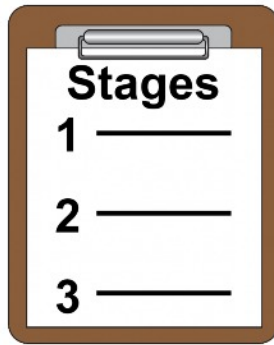


- time served in prison



- time in the community on **licence**.

Licence means the offender must follow rules after they are released.



Stages of the progression model

There are 3 stages of the progression model:



Stage 1. Prison

The offender serves time in prison.



Stage 2. Being watched in the community

The offender lives in the community but is watched closely by the probation service.



Stage 3. Licence in the community

The offender stays on licence and must follow the rules.

How the progression model works

Stage 1



Prisoners who we release using the progression model will spend less time in prison.

Stage 2

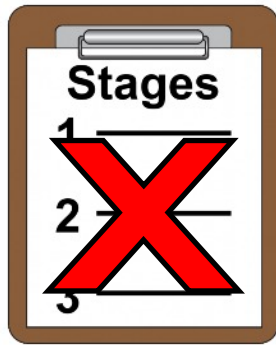


Whilst they are being watched the probation service will meet with offenders to check they are following the rules of the licence.

Stage 3



Offenders stay on licence. Some offenders will not be watched all the time. If they do not follow the rules, they can be sent back to prison.



Who the progression model is not for

We will not use the progression model for people in prison for serious sentences such as:



- life sentences



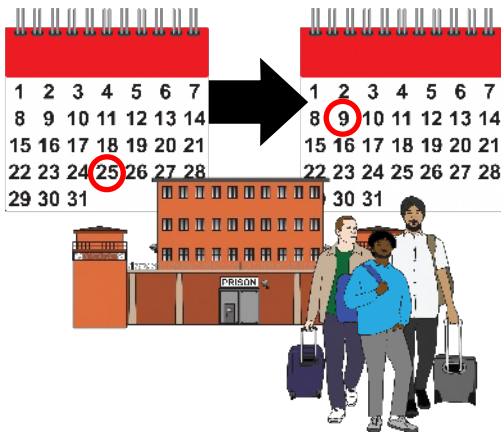
- longer prison sentences that have a set end date



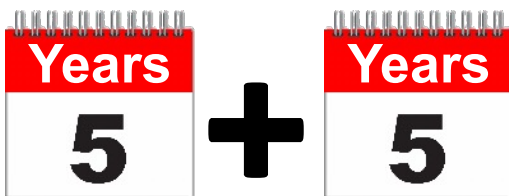
- sentences for the most dangerous offenders



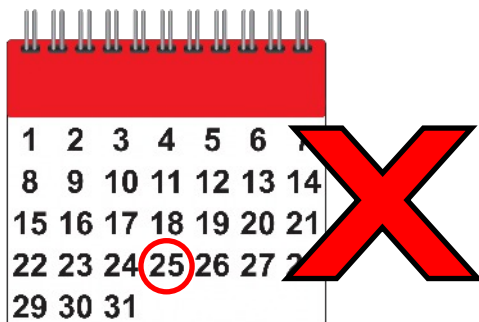
- other sentences with no fixed end date.



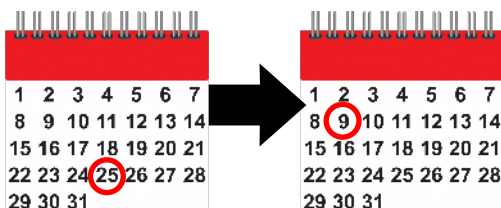
These sentences are not included, but a prisoner's release date might still change if they are serving time for other crimes.



For example, if someone is serving 5 years for rape and another 5 years for assault.



The release date for the rape will not change.



But they might be released earlier because the release date for the assault sentence changes following the model.

3. What rules offenders will have to follow when they are released



Protecting victims is important.



To keep victims safe, the probation service has rules the released offender must follow, these can include:



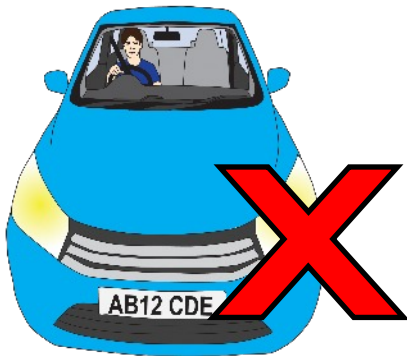
- no contact with the victim or their family



- living at a set address



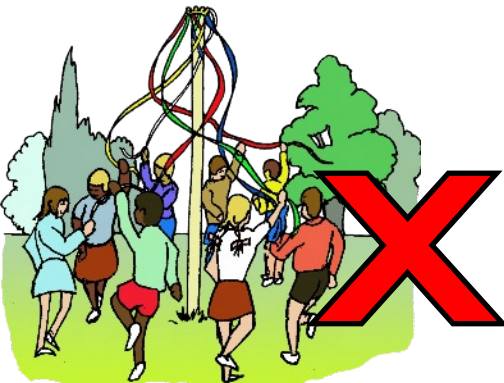
- alcohol testing



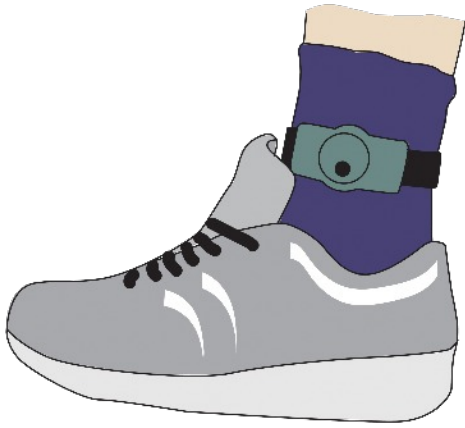
- not driving



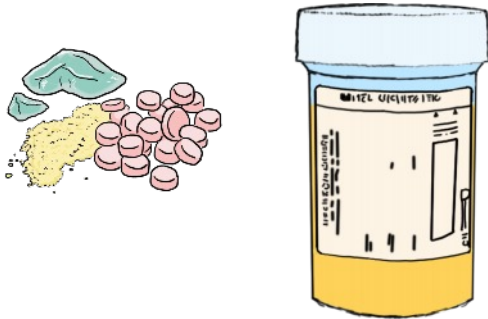
- not going to pubs, clubs or bars



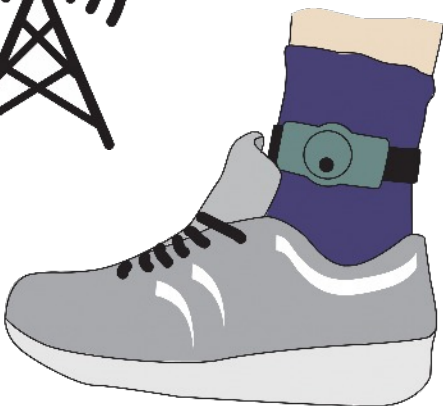
- staying away from community events.



Most offenders will wear an electronic tag on release, unless there is a reason they cannot have one, for example they have no home to go to.



There will be random drug tests for people on licence.

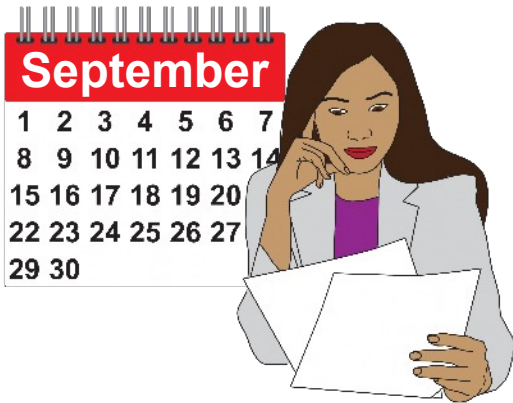


There may be extra rules for rape and certain child sexual offenders such as:

- 12 month **GPS tagging**

GPS tagging uses signals from satellites to find out where a person has been.

4. How victims can get information about release dates



We hope to look at the sentences of all people in prison that are affected by the changes by the end of September.



You do not have to do anything right now. We are working to make sure that affected victims can be contacted to receive information or know that they can ask for information.

The Victim Contact Scheme

You can be part of the Victim Contact Scheme if:

- you are a victim of serious sexual or violent offence, and



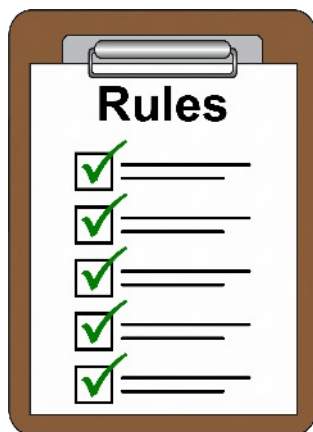


- if the offender was given a prison sentence of 12 months or more.



As part of the scheme you can ask the Victim Liaison Officer for information:

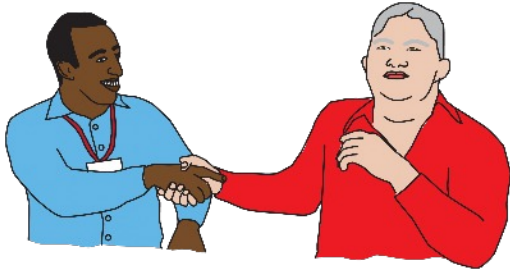
- about an offender's release



- about the rules of the licence



- what happens next.



Victims who are able to join the Victim Contact Scheme, can do so at any time during the offender's sentence.



You can find out more at
VCSenquiries@justice.gov.uk



We are also looking at ways to help people who are not able to use the Victim Contact Scheme.

5. Support for victims



Hearing about an offender's release can be upsetting.



Some victims may need help with their feelings and useful information.



You can find out about help in your area by visiting:
victimandwitnessinformation.org.uk



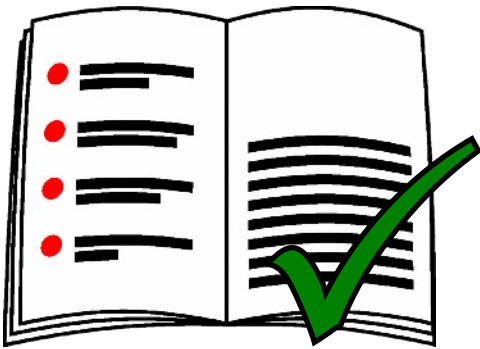
New helpline

We are spending a lot of money to make more victim support services such as a helpline by October 2026.



The helpline will offer you:

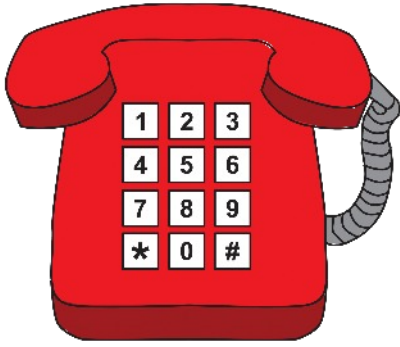
- help with your feelings



- useful information



- a safe place to talk.



Other support numbers

Domestic Abuse Helpline:
0808 200 0247

Rape and Sexual Abuse Helpline:
0808 500 2222

Stalking Helpline:
0808 802 0300

NSPCC:
0808 800 5000

Victim Support:
0808 16 89 111



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