

GIVE A BOOK

www.giveabook.org.uk
Registered charity no 1149664
112-114 Holland Park Avenue, London W11 4UA

GIVE A BOOK/PRISON READING GROUPS

SAFEGUARDING GUIDE FOR VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS

ENTERING SECURE ESTABLISHMENTS

Give a Book (GAB) or Prison Reading Groups (PRG) will tell you the appropriate form of identification to enter the prison.

You will always be accompanied/escorted by a prison officer or a key holder.

Accessibility: prisons have many steps and are not wheelchair accessible. If you have a temporary or permanent disability/condition that affects your mobility you should disclose it to Give a Book so that the prison can be made aware. This includes walking aids such as crutches and canes, and implants such as pacemakers that could affect security scanning

Pregnancy: most prisons will not allow access to visibly pregnant volunteers and Give a Book advises our volunteers to step back from face-to-face work as soon they know they are pregnant.

Volunteers may be invited to become keyholders. If you agree, you will be asked to complete security vetting. Once cleared, you will be asked to attend a security induction session at the prison, after which you will be asked to draw keys during your visits.

If you are in doubt about security at any time during your visit, talk to the person you are working with or seek advice from a uniformed officer.

Prisons are normally a safe, controlled environment where incidents are unusual. However, it is important to be aware and take some basic precautions to promote your own safety and maintain the establishment security.

- You should not work, meet or be alone with a prisoner
- You should be aware and think about your safety and exit strategy, always ensure that you are located close to a clear, barrier free exit route

Patron: Lady Antonia Fraser, CH, DBE
Trustees: Joanne Barnett, Adeela Khan, Eleni Meleagrou, Sarah Moorehead, Sarah Turvey,
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- Look for “green bell” push alarms on the walls in rooms and corridors. Pressing the alarm summons help quickly in the event of an emergency/incident. Make sure you know or ask where the nearest one is before you commence an activity
- If you feel threatened or unsafe in any way, press the “green bell” push alarm and exit the room if possible. The sounding of the alarm bell will prompt available prison officers to go the source of the alarm to support and assist
- If you hear a fire alarm, there will be an evacuation procedure. Make sure you ask about this and know what you have to do to exit safely in this event
- Never enter a prisoner’s cell/accommodation area
- **You must not divulge any personal information such as your address, email or telephone number**
- You must not divulge any information about prisoners, prison staff or the prison environment
- If you overhear conversations that could compromise prison security or safety, or which threaten self-harm or harm to others, you must report it immediately to your prison contact who will advise you of any further action you need to take. You should also inform **GAB/PRG** as soon as practicable
- If you know a prisoner, you must tell **GAB/PRG** immediately

The following list provides some basic instructions you need to follow.

- Personal smoking materials may not be allowed in the prison you are visiting, check first with your point of contact
- Don’t leave personal possessions, hand bags or work bags unattended

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- When working in a prison, don't agree to do anything for a prisoner outside the prison, such as make a telephone call or post a letter
- In meetings, you and the prisoner must strictly adhere to a "no touch" policy
- Never enquire about prisoners' offences or engage in these types of discussion
- Do not bring alcohol, drugs or mobile phones into the prison for ANY reason

Please wear appropriate clothing when visiting a secure environment. Err on the side of caution as unwelcome inappropriate attention or comments from prisoners can be an unpleasant and often intimidating experience.

Bringing a prohibited item into a prison can have serious consequences, e.g., it is against the law to take a mobile phone into an establishment. Please familiarise yourself with the following prohibited items. This list is not exhaustive and additional requirements may be in place.

- Mobile phones
- Any electronic equipment, e.g., Kindle, Ipad, Ipod, earphones
- USB stick
- Alcohol
- Firearms, ammunition
- Matches
- Scissors
- Jewellery (only that which is worn)
- Glue/solvents
- Syringes
- Cameras
- Yeast
- Explosives
- Tin foil & clingfilm (even around food)
- Blu-tack
- Chewing gum
- Oversized sports bags

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- Aerosols
- Suitcases
- Computer games/discs
- Rope
- Mains electrical items
- Knives (kitchen, eating) or any other weapon
- Large umbrellas

Please be aware of your posts on the internet and social media after your visit. Information you place on these platforms could potentially end up in the public domain and be seen or used by someone it was not intended for, even if it was intended to be 'private' or is on a closed profile or group. Please ensure you follow the prompts below:

- Don't disclose any information relating to the prison or prisoners
- Always think before you post
- Understand the legalities and potential consequences
- Remember that you are responsible for everything you post online

Read our full safeguarding policy [here](#)

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