

# Keeping in contact: Letters

Compiled by AFFECT - Action For Families Enduring Criminal Trauma. [©2005 AFFECT] - Charity Number 1097087

The information below draws together the experience of *AFFECT* members and the information contained within HMPrison booklets to create a straightforward guide to prison *letters*.

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- There is usually no restriction on the number of letters a prisoner can receive.
- Prison staff do not usually read letters, but they will be opened to check for contraband.
- People on remand can usually send two free letters each week.
- Convicted people can usually send one free letter each week.
- If paid for out of *private cash*, a prisoner may send as many letters as they wish.
- A prisoner can obtain paper and envelopes, but these may have the prison's name printed on them. Sending in paper, envelopes and stamps can be of great use to a prisoner.
- Although not common, the governor can order *routine reading*. All letters to and from the prisoner will then be read, and limits may be set on the number and length of letters.
- **Letters to and from a prisoner must not:**
  - Discuss escape plans
  - Reduce prison security
  - Affect national security
  - Help commit a criminal offence
  - Help to break prison rules
  - Contain threats
  - Contain blackmail
  - Be racially offensive
  - Be obscene

If the rules are broken, *routine reading* can be ordered or the receipt and sending of letters stopped altogether.

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*AFFECT* hope that this information aids you in maintain contact with your loved one. If we can help further, please contact us at [www.affect.org.uk](http://www.affect.org.uk).

Updated 30<sup>th</sup> March 2005; please inform us of any errors at [information@affect.org.uk](mailto:information@affect.org.uk).

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