



## Opening Hours

**Monday to Friday**  
**9.00am - 8.00pm**

**Saturday and Sunday**  
**10.00am - 3.00pm**

## Home Detention Curfew (HDC)

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### What is Home Detention Curfew?

A Home Detention Curfew (HDC), or 'tag' as it is commonly known, is a scheme that allows certain prisoners to be released from prison early subject to an electronically monitored curfew. Prisoners serving sentences of between three months and four years can be considered for the scheme, which can grant early release between 10 days and 135 days earlier than the halfway point of the sentence.

Not all prisoners will be eligible for HDC as certain offences automatically rule out the prospect of release under the scheme as set out below:

- Anyone serving 4 years or more for any offence
- People who have committed sexual offences, who are required to register
- Prisoners convicted of violent or sexual offences currently serving an extended sentence
- Prisoners serving a sentence under section 1 of the Prisoner's Return to Custody Act 1995
- Prisoners serving a sentence for breach of the curfew requirement of a Community Order
- Prisoners who have ever been recalled to prison for failing to comply with the HDC curfew conditions
- Prisoners who have ever been returned to custody by the court for committing an imprisonable offence during the at-risk period

- Prisoners currently serving a recall from early release on compassionate grounds
- Foreign national prisoners who have been recommended for deportation by the court and those who are liable to deportation and a decision to deport has been issued

There are some prisoners who will be deemed presumed unsuitable for HDC consideration too. Please click [here](#) for guidance on the assessment process.

### Does the prisoner have to apply for HDC?

No. If the prisoner is eligible for a Home Detention Curfew then assessments will normally begin around 5 days after sentence calculation to identify HDC suitability. If the prisoner is eligible, they will be asked to complete a form detailing the proposed address they wish to be curfewed to.

### What if the HDC application is refused?

If a Home Detention Curfew application is refused, the prisoner will be informed and told the reasons why. They can appeal against this decision through the request/complaints procedure or via their solicitor.

### How does the scheme work?

Under the scheme, the prisoner is required to stay in their home, or approved premises, for the duration of the curfew. An electronic tag is attached to the ankle of the prisoner. The tag looks a bit like a bulky wristwatch. The tag is waterproof and shockproof which means the person can wear it in the bath and shower and can also go swimming

and the tag will not be damaged. The contractors who fit the tag will also install a monitoring box in the home of the person on curfew. This box sends signals to the control centre to let them know that the person is at home. If the person leaves the house during their curfew hours, or tampers with the box, then the monitoring centre will be notified and the breach investigated.

The curfew contractors will visit to install the equipment at the start of the curfew during curfew hours. If the prisoner is not at home during this time then they will be in breach of their curfew. It is important that the prisoner stays in their home during curfew hours even if the equipment has not yet been fitted.

*Any individual whom has previously breached a HDC curfew would not be considered for this form of release on subsequent sentences.*

### **Is my home suitable?**

The National Probation Service usually checks the suitability of the accommodation before HDC is approved. They might visit the home or make a telephone call to ensure the suitability of the address. The National Probation Service are not concerned with the tidiness of the house and do not want to inspect the property, they are only interested in ensuring everyone in the house is aware and accepting of the implications of living with someone on a curfew.

There needs to be an electricity supply in the home for the equipment to work. In the past a telephone line was also required but this is no longer the case.

### **Does the curfew address have to remain the same?**

The curfew must generally be spent at the same address. If the person is on HDC from prison then permission must be sought from the Governor before any changes can be made to the order. This will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

If on bail from the court, or on a community order, permission must be sought from the courts before any change of address is made. Under no circumstances should a prisoner attempt to move address without first seeking the correct authority.

### **Can someone leave the address during their curfew hours?**

Unless prior permission has been granted the person on curfew must remain in their address during their curfew hours. The only times someone may be permitted out during their curfew hours are for:

- A wedding or funeral (service only) of a close relative
- A job interview
- Acting as a witness in court, or
- Emergencies

To gain permission the person on a curfew needs to contact the customer service department of the tagging contractors at least 24 hours before they need to go out (where possible). The customer service department will tell the person on curfew who they will need to seek permission from. They will also tell the person what evidence they need to prove the cause of their proposed absence, for example a letter inviting them to a job interview. They then need to wait for permission to leave the premises before they go out. If, in the case of an emergency, the person on a curfew needs to leave the house and does not have time to contact the customer service centre then they need to let them know as soon as possible. They also need to provide written proof covering their absence, for example a medical note.

### **Can someone go outside during curfew hours to smoke?**

The curfew is only monitored within the confines of the home. Leaving the home during curfew hours, even to go into the back yard or garden, will trigger an alert at the monitoring centre and breach action may be instigated.



## **Can someone change the hours of their curfew?**

It may be possible to change the hours of the curfew if the current hours would interfere with caring responsibilities or employment opportunities. The person on curfew must contact the Governor of the prison where they served their sentence or the court (if on bail or a community order) before any changes can be made to their curfew hours. They may be able to get help from their solicitor or Offender Manager to do this.

## **What happens if the curfew is breached?**

If the curfew is breached, either by being absent from home during curfew hours, or tampering with the tag or monitoring equipment, the HDC contractors will act upon it immediately. This could result in the prisoner being returned to court or even into custody.

## **What happens at the end of the curfew?**

The HDC contractors will visit to remove the equipment at the end of the curfew, during curfew hours. This can be any time up to midnight. It is important the person on curfew is home at this time. If the contractors cannot remove their equipment then they will report it to the police who may charge the person on curfew with theft.

## **Scotland**

### **HDC for long term prisoners**

If you are sentenced to four years or more, you will be classified as a long term prisoner. Depending on the nature of the crime and the Parole Board of Scotland's ruling, you will usually be eligible for HDC at the parole qualifying date (the half-way point of the full sentence). A full assessment will take place in line with procedures for all prisoners.

