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| Unwanted Prisoner Contact Service Briefing Summary | |
| **This briefing outlines the Unwanted Prisoner Contact Service (UPC).**  All members of staff in prisons, probation and HM Court and Tribunal Service should be made aware and actively promote this service.  The service is available to any member of the public, including all victims of crime, and survivors of domestic abuse who want to STOP contact from prisoners.  In the first instance should anyone contact you and request to have no contact from a prisoner please complete the online form at  [www.gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact](http://www.gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact)  Qr code  Description automatically generated  This is a simple, easy, and fast method of submitting a request.  The new online form streamlines and helps prison operations.  Should a request be made without the victim’s knowledge or consent, the prison will consider the request in line with HMPPS policy as outlined in the [SOP](#SOP). | Contents  [Summary](#SUMMARY)  [Background](#BACKGROUND)  [How to submit a request](#HOWTOSUBMIT)  [Process](#PROCESS)  [HM Prison Service guidance](#HMPGUIDANCE)   * [Policy guidance](#HMPGUIDANCE) * [Top tip](#PRISONTIPTOP)   [Probation Service guidance](#PROBATIONSSERVICEGUIDANCE)   * [Policy guidance](#PROBATIONSSERVICEGUIDANCE) * [Top tip](#TOPTIPFORPROBATION)   [Frequently asked questions](#FREQUENTLYASKEDQUESTIOONS)  [Contact details](#CONTACTDETAILS)  [Standard Operating P](#SOP)rocedure (SOP)    [Additional guidance on restricting communications](#ACCIPF)  [Victim Services further support](#VICTIMSUPPORT) | |

# Background

* The **Unwanted Prisoner Contact (formerly Victims Helpline)** is anational service that prevents victims, or any member of the public, receiving unwanted contact from prisoners.
* The service is available to any member of the public (including **all victims** of crime), with a strong focus on protecting victims of Domestic Abuse and Stalking. It can be used by anyone who wishes to stop contact from prisoners. This includes
  + - stopping unwanted letters,
    - blocking phone calls,
    - texts or
    - messages from a prisoner.
* Run by HMPPS this is a service that anyone can use irrespective if they are for example:
* a member of the public (including **all victims** of crime),
* the police,
* probation practitioner/ victim liaison officer acting on behalf of the victim
* a family member or friend acting on behalf of the victim
* or an organisation working on behalf of the victim to block the contact i.e., solicitors, victim and/or domestic abuse charities.
* A victim can also contact the service if they are worried about someone **being released from prison**. For enquiries of this nature please contact the service via telephone: 0300 060 6699, open Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm
* The [GOV.UK](http://gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact) form also allows a third party to share information on behalf of a victim or any member of the public, with or without their consent.

* Requests without the individual’s consent cannot be processed as a direct no-contact request. The Governor can consider the information in line with HMPPS policy and make an informed, proportionate, and justifiable decision about restricting communications. Whether to block contact or not, or to monitor communications in order to gain intelligence and assist in making an informed decision. Prison staff dealing with these requests must refer to the [SOP](#SOP) and relevant policies signposted within this document whether to block contact or not or to monitor communications in order to gain intelligence.
* A new streamlined process, including the online form, was created and tested during the eight weeks of the pilot in Thames Valley and Kent police areas. The pilot was hugely successful and received positive feedback from all stakeholders.

# How to submit a request

* The online form should be used by all parties as the first step in reporting unwanted contact, rather than emailing or calling in the request.
* The service can be contacted in a number of ways:
  + Go to: [www.gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact](http://www.gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact)
  + Or use the QR code below:

Qr code

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* + Email: unwantedprisonercontact@justice.gov.uk
  + Telephone: 0300 060 6699, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm
* We would strongly encourage the use of the [GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact) form which is accessible via the link or QR code above. It is resource efficient for all government agencies to use this method to stop prisoner contact.
* We would prefer that a request for blocking contact is made using the process above rather than a call directly made to the prison.

**Process**

* Once a request has been submitted, the Unwanted Prisoner Contact service will send it to the relevant prison within 1 working day. The Governor will ensure there is a process for the UPC request form to be allocated to a relevant member of staff. Establishments must ensure that staff who undertake duties relating to the restriction of communications are familiar with the requirements of national policy – particularly the [Authorised Communications Controls and Interception (ACCI) Policy Framework](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Authorised-Communications-Controls-and-Interception-Policy-Framework(1).aspx?web=1) (ACCI PF) and have sight/access to the related Operations Manual. Prisons must consider the request in line with the relevant policy, which is simplified below into four pathways.
* Pathway 1: **Contact is Identified as Victim of a Prisoner’s Offence**
* Pathway 2: **No Contact Request is Made (Directly)**
* Pathway 3: **No Contact Request is Made (Indirectly/By Third Party and with subject’s consent)**
* Pathway 4: **Information/Intelligence/Risk Indicates Restriction is Necessary and Proportionate (“Contact of Concern”)** this involves and assessment of necessity and proportionally in line with the [ACCI PF](#ACCIPF)
* The timeframe for the assessment and decision on whether the prison will impose a no-contact restriction will vary depending on the complexity of the request and any other local demands.
* The information provided will be shared with the establishment where the prisoner is located and any other establishment the prisoner is transferred to.
* Any existing court orders can be added to the online application for HMPPS to initiate the contact block.
* The identity of the person subject to the unwanted contact request will be disclosed to the prisoner. The establishment must inform prisoners when a no-contact request has been put in place, and this includes the name of who they are restricted from contacting.
* Full details are contained in the [Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)](#SOP)

**HM Prison Service guidance**

* Please ensure that the posters provided are placed in visitor registration areas.
* Further guidance:

Staff undertaking activities relating to communications, communications controls and public protection **must** ensure they follow the requirements of the following national policies:

* [The Authorised Communications Controls and Interception Policy Framework](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Authorised-Communications-Controls-and-Interception-Policy-Framework(1).aspx?web=1):
* [PSI 49/2011 - Prisoner Communication Services](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Prisoner-communications-policy--PSI-49-2011.aspx?web=1)
* [PSI 18/2016 - Public Protection Manual](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Public-protection-manual-.aspx?web=1)

Further guidance can also be found:

* The ACCI Operations Manual and Detailed Guidance - [Authorised Communications Controls and Interception Policy Framework (sharepoint.com)](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Authorised-Communications-Controls-and-Interception-Policy-Framework(1).aspx)
* [EQuiP](https://equip-portal.equip.service.justice.gov.uk/CtrlWebIsapi.dll/?__id=webDiagram.show&map=0%3A9A63E167DE4B400EA07F81A9271E1944&dgm=3A919AC987044DBB9531081CFA5DA9E5)

**Top tip**

* **IMPORTANT** –It’s important to remember if a prisoner asks for a welfare call, checks should be made to ensure they aren’t calling a blocked number.

**Probation Service guidance**

* The Probation Service should ensure that Victim Liaison Officers (VLOs) are aware of the Unwanted Prisoner Contact service. VLOs can support any victims they are working with as part of the Victim Contact Scheme to use the service to report unwanted prisoner contact.
* Please ensure that the posters provided below are placed in visitor registration areas.
* Further guidance:

Staff undertaking activities relating to communications, communications controls and public protection **must** ensure they follow the requirements of the following national policies:

* [The Authorised Communications Controls and Interception Policy Framework:](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Authorised-Communications-Controls-and-Interception-Policy-Framework(1).aspx?web=1)
* [PSI 49/2011 - Prisoner Communication Services](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Prisoner-communications-policy--PSI-49-2011.aspx?web=1)
* [PSI 18/2016 - Public Protection Manual](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Public-protection-manual-.aspx?web=1)

Further guidance can also be found:

* The ACCI Operations Manual and Detailed Guidance - [Authorised Communications Controls and Interception Policy Framework (sharepoint.com)](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Authorised-Communications-Controls-and-Interception-Policy-Framework(1).aspx)
* [EQuiP](https://equip-portal.equip.service.justice.gov.uk/CtrlWebIsapi.dll/?__id=webDiagram.show&map=0%3A9A63E167DE4B400EA07F81A9271E1944&dgm=3A919AC987044DBB9531081CFA5DA9E5)

**Top tips for probation**

* Prison Offender Managers (POMs) will be involved with decisions to restrict a prisoner’s communications and this will form part of the risk management plan in custody. The POM will inform the Community Offender Manager (COM) of any no-contact restrictions as part of the pre-release and risk management planning and ensure the relevant risk assessments are updated with any information shared via the UPC service.

**Frequently asked questions**

**Who can request a block on unwanted prisoner contact?**

* Anyone can submit a request to the Unwanted Prisoner Contact service to stop contact or share information. This includes
  + any member of the public (including **all victims** of crime),
  + the police,
  + probation practitioner/ victim liaison officer
  + a family member or friend on behalf of the victim,
  + or an organisation working on behalf of the victim to block the contact ie. solicitor, victim or domestic abuse charities.
* The establishment will receive and deal with the request in accordance with the law and HMPPS policy,

**What is needed when making a third-party request to block unwanted contact?**

* For a no-contact request to be applied, the requesting third party must have the consent of the individual.
* Third parties can share information about victims of a prisoner’s offence to assist the prison to manage and restrict contact with victims. This is managed separately to no-contact requests.
* If the third party does not have the individual’s consent, then the request cannot be processed as a direct no-contact request. Instead, the prison will need to assess whether it is necessary and proportionate to apply a restriction in accordance with Prison Rule 34. Information shared as part of the request may be considered by the establishment as part of the assessment in line with HMPPS policy as outlined in the [SOP](#SOP). Further information can be sought from the requester to aid decision making.

**What happens once a request has been made?**

* The Unwanted Prisoner Contact service will pass on the request to the holding establishment within one working day.
  + For no-contact requests (those made on someone's behalf and with their consent) the prison will aim to apply immediate restrictions.
  + Requests made without consent of the individual will need be considered on a case-by-case basis by prisons, who will assess whether it is necessary and proportionate in accordance with the [ACCI PF](#ACCIPF) and Prison Rule 34 to apply a restriction and approve accordingly.

**Will the requester be informed of the outcome?**

* When a no-contact request is made with consent the person making the request will be informed of the decision, and any restrictive action.

**What happens if the contact continues?**

* The requester is strongly advised to submit the form again, there is a question on the [GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact) form that asks whether the person has contacted the service before regarding the prisoner. Please give as much detail on how the contact is continuing. The requester can also report this to the police. The establishment can investigate suspected breaches or other illicit communications activity and take further action in line with national policy. The establishment should also consider informing the PIO.

**How do prisons prevent contact?**

* When a communication restriction is applied the individual’s contact number/s are removed from the prisoner's PIN-phone account. Staff in relevant departments (e.g., mail room) will also be made aware of the restriction to ensure that letters from the prisoner to the individual are also stopped.

**What if the requester wishes to reinitiate contact?**

* The requester (or subject, if the request was made by a third party) can email the Unwanted Prisoner Contact team requesting to re-establish contact. This will be forwarded to the establishment holding the prisoner.

**What are the other ways that the prisoner can still contact the victim and what can I do?**

* Unfortunately, there are a number of ways a prisoner can try and circumvent restrictions i.e., illegal mobile phones, a welfare call or through other prisoners and their contacts. It’s important the requester continues to let us know if calls are still being received by completing the online form so that the establishment can take any necessary steps and take action.
* We would also stress that if a welfare call is requested by a prisoner in an establishment the prison officer checks the number being dialled is not on the blocked list.

**What information do prisons need to prevent contact?**

* Provide a comprehensive list of names, addresses and all telephones numbers that you wish removed. Where requests are being made without the consent of the individual, providing further details and a rationale may support the prison in their assessment of necessity and proportionality.

**Is there anything prisons will need to consider as part of a no-contact request?**

* If a no-contact restriction is requested, and there is somebody else at the address/using the number requiring access (e.g., a child), then the prison will first need to identify a solution with the subject to enable the restriction to be applied.

**Why are communication restrictions important?**

* This is hugely important. It protects victims and witnesses from unwanted contact. This is especially important if the victim is vulnerable or subject to controlling or coercive behaviour, exploitation, harassment, or intimidation. Preventing contact is critical in stopping further harm or trauma, maintaining confidence, and supporting prosecutions.

**If I am a professional working outside of the prison and I have concerns about a prisoner contacting someone, do I need consent to request non-contact on someone’s behalf?**

* You should ideally have discussed non-contact with the person and will require their consent for a no-contact request. Where a request is made without the individual’s consent, for example a probation/victim liaison professional might identify an over-riding safeguarding concern, the prison will need to assess whether it is necessary and proportionate to apply a restriction in accordance with the [ACCI PF](#ACCIPF) and Prison Rule 34. In such cases the information you share in the request may assist the Governor in the assessment.

**What advice should be given if contact continues?**

* Please continue to make the Unwanted Prisoner Contact Service aware. The police will consider further prosecution – use of illicit mobile in prison, witness intimidation, any breach of Court Order etc. Always report this contact through the [GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact) form which alerts the prison and enables them to consider cell searches etc.

**What national policies relate to the restriction of communications?**

* Staff undertaking activities relating to communications, communications controls and public protection **must** ensure they follow the requirements of the following national policies:
* [The Authorised Communications Controls and Interception Policy Framework:](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Authorised-Communications-Controls-and-Interception-Policy-Framework(1).aspx?web=1)
* [PSI 49/2011 - Prisoner Communication Services](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Prisoner-communications-policy--PSI-49-2011.aspx?web=1)
* [PSI 18/2016 - Public Protection Manual](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Public-protection-manual-.aspx?web=1)

Further guidance can also be found:

* The ACCI Operations Manual and Detailed Guidance - [Authorised Communications Controls and Interception Policy Framework (sharepoint.com)](https://justiceuk.sharepoint.com/sites/HMPPSIntranet/SitePages/Authorised-Communications-Controls-and-Interception-Policy-Framework(1).aspx)
* [EQuiP](https://equip-portal.equip.service.justice.gov.uk/CtrlWebIsapi.dll/?__id=webDiagram.show&map=0%3A9A63E167DE4B400EA07F81A9271E1944&dgm=3A919AC987044DBB9531081CFA5DA9E5)

**How do I submit a request on behalf of a victim?**

* Please use the [online form](https://gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact) and/or the QR code it is the quickest and easiest way of submitting a request. Try and provide as much information as possible, but don’t worry if you’re unable to.

Qr code

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* You can also contact the service via telephone: -0300 060 6699, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm or by email:  **unwantedprisonercontact@justice.gov.uk**
* We would prefer that a request for blocking contact is made using the process above rather than a call directly made to the prison.

**Contact details**

Should you have any questions relating to policies please contact:

**Policy Guidance**

Helen Belfield - [helen.belfield@justice.gov.uk](mailto:helen.belfield@justice.gov.uk)

Gareth Sloane - [gareth.sloane@justice.gov.uk](mailto:gareth.sloane@justice.gov.uk)

**Unwanted Prisoner Contact Service**

If the questions relate to completion of the [GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact) form, the Unwanted Prisoner Contact Service or updating victims. Please contact the Unwanted Prisoner Contact functional mailbox. Email- **unwantedprisonercontact@justice.gov.uk**

**Standard Operating Procedure**



**Additional guidance on restricting communications**



**Victim Services further support**

**Samaritans- 116 123**

Available 24 hours offering support for any problems or concern.

**Support U 0118 321 9111**

Provides specialist support for LGBTQ+

**Refuge 0808 2000 247**

Supporting those suffering from domestic abuse 24- hour service

**Solace 0800 970 9952**

Supporting the victims of rape and serious sexual assault

**National Centre for Domestic Violence 0800 970 2070**

A free service that lets anyone who has recently suffered from, or been threatened with domestic abuse apply for an emergency court injunction

**Victim Support** [**08 08 16 89 111**](tel:08%2008%2016%2089%20111)

Free and confidential help to victims of crime, witnesses, the family and friends with 24 hours live chat and helpline available.

**Women’s Aid**

Free 24-hour national helpline run by Women’s Aid and Refuge

**National Stalking Helpline 0808 802 0300**

Guidance on the law, how to report stalking, gathering evidence, staying safe and reducing the risk.

**Karma Nirvana 0800 5999 247**

Confidential helpline providing emotional and practical support and advice for victims and survivors of forced marriage and/or honour-based violence

**Forced Marriage Unit 0207 008 0151**

Contact the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) if you are trying to stop a forced marriage or you need help leaving a marriage you’ve been forced into.

**FLOWS (Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors) 0203 745 7707**

Legal support to help protect women against domestic abuse

**Sharan Project 0844 504 3231**

Provides support to vulnerable women, particularly of South Asian origin, who have been disowned

**Men’s Advice Line 0808 801 0327**

Confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse

**Respect.uk -Call 0808 8010327**

Advice and support for those who are finding it difficult to manage their behaviour, male victims of domestic abuse, and young people using violence and abuse in close relationships.

**ManKind initiative 01823 334244**

Confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence

**Hourglass 0808 808 8141**

Hourglass confidential helpline provides information and support to anyone concerned about harm, abuse or exploration of an older person.

**Sign Health** [**020 3947 2600**](tel:+02039472600)

Support and advice for victims of domestic abuse who are deaf or hard of hearing

**Childline 0800 111**

24-hour helpline for children

**NSPCC 0808 800 5000**

Includes a helpline for adults who are concerned about a child