

Understanding Supervision

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The courts have given you a community order, which means the Probation Service will be supervising you until the end of the order. We also supervise men and women who are released from prison on a licence.

We want to supervise and work with you to stop you getting into trouble again.

We are not going to abuse you. We will treat you with respect, and we expect you to behave in a respectful manner towards us - and the people you will meet while on supervision.

This is a chance to get your life back on track. Part of your supervision will involve looking at why you have got into trouble this time, and in the past if you have re-offended.

- Got drug problems? We can help.
- Got drink problems? We can help.
- Can't get a job? We can help.
- Want to 'brush-up' on your reading and writing? We can help.

We want you to attend all your appointments, and be motivated to work with us. We can achieve more if you want to change your life.

Attendance: You must keep the appointments made with your responsible officer, or other people, and co-operate with all parts of your order/licence. If you don't, we will take action against you. We have no choice but to act after two failures, but we may act earlier if we think it is necessary.

Providing explanations: If you don't keep an appointment with your officer (or an appointment made by your officer), you must provide a satisfactory explanation as to why within a week (five working days). If you don't, your absence will be treated as unacceptable, even if the reason would have been OK if you had told us earlier. Remember a good reason given late is not good enough.

Being on time: You must not be late for an appointment. If you are, your responsible officer may not be able to see you. You will also be expected to provide an explanation for being late. If we are not satisfied with your reason, a final warning or breach will follow.

Providing proof: Explanations for failed appointments must be backed up by evidence, such as a note from your employer or a sick note from your doctor. Without this, we may not be able to accept your explanation.

If you have to wait, we will give you a reason why.

We will take action if other people's behaviour offends you. We will take action if your behaviour offends others.

We may refer you to other kinds of help.

We will give you written details of your next appointment.

You have a right to be treated fairly and without discrimination. The Probation Service will not tolerate racist, sexist or other discriminatory behaviour towards you. It expects you to behave equally fairly to other people.

If you are offended by the remarks or actions of visitors, or staff, here please let the Senior Probation Officer know. Similarly, if you cause offence, formal action could be taken against you.

If you are not satisfied by our response, you get you have the right to take your complaint to the Chief Officer.

In line with our Equal Opportunities Policy, we aim to offer an equality of service, regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, religion or belief, marital status, age, sexuality, disability or any other improper grounds.

What is a Community Order?

It is a sentence of the court, and the aim might be:

- to punish you;
- to reduce crime;
- to change the way you behave and help you stay away from crime;
- to protect the public; or
- to make you pay back something to the community or to the victims of your crime.

What is a Suspended Sentence Order?

This is a prison sentence, but the court has given you the chance to avoid going to prison if you complete the Community Requirements of your order.

The aims are the same as above.

If you commit another offence while on a Suspended Sentence Order you will be sent back to court, and may well be sent to prison.

What is a post-custody licence?

All prison sentences of 12 months or more (and all prison sentences for young offenders) involve a period of licence as part of the overall sentence. This means that part of your sentence is served in custody and part in the community, under the supervision of the Probation Service.

How does it work?

On release, your RESPONSIBLE OFFICER will interview you to work out a sentence plan, building on the plan drawn up in prison. It will involve discussing the issues that relate to your offending. (The sentence plan will be reviewed every four months.) You should sign the plan, adding any comments of your own, so that it is a jointly agreed plan. We will also give you a copy.

What are the rules?

We expect you to co-operate with the licence.

There are six standard conditions:

- Be well-behaved. Do not commit an offence and do not do anything that could ruin your chances of re-settling back in the community.
- Keep in touch with your supervising officer and do what they ask you to do.
- Let your supervising officer know where you are living if they need to.
- Live at an address that your supervising officer says is OK. Tell your supervising officer (in writing) if you plan to change your address or stay at another address (even for one night).
- Only do work (paid or unpaid) that your supervising officer says is OK. Tell your supervising officer if you plan to change the work you do.
- Stay in the United Kingdom, unless you need to be deported or removed to another country.

You may also have to follow some additional conditions.

What happens when the licence ends?

You will still be "at risk" until the date on which your sentence ends. This means that you are "at risk" of being returned to prison if you commit another offence before the end of your sentence.

If you are on curfew

The curfew means that you must be in a particular place at certain times. This will be for between 2 and 12 hours at a time, depending on what the court has decided. For example, the court might decide that you must spend 12 hours every day at home. You will need to keep to the rules of the curfew for as long as the requirement lasts.

You may be electronically monitored, which will help us to know where you go. If so, you will be given tagging equipment by an electronic monitoring company. They will make sure you know how to use it.

Your responsible officer will discuss the details of your Curfew Requirement with you.

They will:

- make clear where you have to be for your Curfew;
- make clear what will happen if you do not keep to your curfew;
- check where you go.

About your responsible officer

You will have one person who you must keep in contact with while you are on your Community Order, Suspended Sentence Order or Licence. This person is called your "responsible officer". You might be told to keep in contact with other people too.

The court expects your responsible officer to make sure that you stick to the rules of your requirements and complete your sentence successfully. If you do not do this, the court expects your responsible officer to do something about it.

What your responsible officer will do

They will:

- explain your sentence to you;
- talk to you about the plan for your sentence;
- talk to you about what you need help with;
- make clear when they can help you with it;

- make clear what sort of Unpaid Work you will be doing (if appropriate);
- make clear what will happen if you do not turn up for work;
- make clear what you must do and how long you will need to do it for;
- explain how the programme (if applicable) will be run and what it will cover;
- make clear what will happen if you do not stick to the rules of the programme;
- make clear what will happen if you do not attend appointments or if you do not do what your responsible officer asks you to do;
- make arrangements for you to be taken back to court if you do not co-operate or comply with your order/sentence;
- review your progress and work with you to help you complete your sentence successfully; and
- treat you fairly

They may also refer you to other sources of help such as:

- courses run by the Probation Service;
- a volunteer/mentor;
- assisted projects;
- community resources.