

Introduction

Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) welcomes family and friends who wish to visit NSW correctional centres. CSNSW recognises that visits are important to maintain strong family relationships and make it easier for inmates to readjust to life in the community when they are released.

- **In 2017/18, more than 248,000 individual visits were made to correctional centres.**

CSNSW is committed to providing child and family-friendly visits areas at its centres, and to facilitating regular visits of family members to inmates.

Who can visit an inmate?

Families, friends and community members can arrange to visit inmates. However, an inmate may refuse to meet a visitor, if she or he does not wish to have the visit.

Legal professionals may also apply to visit inmates in preparation for forthcoming legal proceedings. Journalists are not allowed to visit inmates.

How to locate an inmate and arrange a visit?

To find out where an inmate is located a visitor should contact:

- (02) 8346 1000 Sentence Administration between 8am and 4.30pm, weekdays
- (02) 9289 5258 State-Wide Sentence Administration between 4.30pm and 10pm weekdays and 8.30am and 4.30pm weekends and public holidays.

Visiting hours vary from one centre to another and some centres only allow visits at the weekend because inmates are working during the week. The length of visit permitted also varies between centres. Inmates on remand are permitted two visits per week and sentenced inmates one visit per week.

To check visiting hours or to book a visit, visitors should contact the appropriate correctional centre (phone numbers are available on the CSNSW website or mobile phone Visits App).

When making a booking, visitors will be asked for the inmate's name and their Master Index Number (MIN). They will also be asked to provide their own Visitor Identification Number (VIN).

When making a booking for the first time, an adult visitor will be allocated a VIN, provided they give a suitable form of identification (ID), such as a Drivers Licence or Medicare card number.

What identification is required for a visit?

The first time an adult visits an inmate they are required to provide appropriate forms of ID from a CSNSW approved list, such as a current Drivers Licence or passport. One form of ID must show the visitor's current residential address. The *Visiting a Correctional Centre* booklet (available on the CSNSW website) contains the current list of approved forms of ID. Children under 18 do not need to provide identification, if accompanied by an adult.

All visitor details will be stored on the CSNSW electronic database and retrieved when the visitor makes a further appointment for a visit.

Biometric Identification System

Biometric identification systems are currently installed at 16 correctional centres, and are used to photograph a visitor's face, scan their irises and capture their fingerprints. The system is networked across all 16 centres, with the exception of the Special Purpose Centre, Long Bay.

The captured information is retained on the system and is available to all networked centres



for subsequent visits. However, visitors must also carry identification when visiting an inmate in case the biometric identification system is not working.

At centres where there is no biometric identification system visitors will be required to produce the forms of ID as outlined above (even if they have been issued with a VIN).

Removal of face covering for identification

The verification of the identity of a person may require the removal of a face covering by the visitor. A face covering means an item of clothing, helmet, mask or any other thing that is worn by a person and prevents the person's face from being seen, whether wholly or partially. Requests for visitors to remove face coverings will be carried out in a culturally sensitive manner.

Visitor searches and restrictions

Visitors must not take into a centre any prohibited items, such as mobile phones, cameras, weapons, drugs and alcohol. Visitors are also required to leave their personal items, such as wallets, cigarettes, lighters and mobile phones in secure lockers provided at each centre. The lockers are coin operated, so a visitor should enquire about the amount of coins required when booking the visit.

Prison officers may undertake various searches to ensure that no prohibited items are brought into the centre by the visitor, including turning out pockets and children's pockets, opening bags or other personal belongings, head-to-toe hand-held scanners, walk-through metal detectors and drug detection dogs.

Visitors are not allowed to bring in items for inmates with the exception of unframed photos (not contained in albums), newspapers and magazines in a language other than English that are not available through CSNSW newspaper 'buy-ups' and tracksuits for female inmates. These items cannot be given directly to inmates.

Visits App for iPhone, iPad and Android devices

The CSNSW Visits App has been designed for families, friends and legal professionals who wish to visit an inmate. It provides useful information about correctional centres, including phone numbers, addresses (linked to maps), transport options, visiting times and conditions, legal visits and other relevant information. The App is also available in Arabic, Chinese, Spanish and

Vietnamese languages, which can be selected by changing the language settings on the mobile device.

The Visits App can be downloaded from the CSNSW website or directly from the mobile device's associated App Store.

Video conferencing

CSNSW may provide video conferencing facilities to inmates where it is difficult for family members to visit a prison in person, for example where a family member is too sick to travel or lives a long way from the centre.

The inmate is required to complete a Family Video Contact application form, which is available from the officer in charge of video conferencing or the Services And Programs Officer (SAPO) at each correctional centre.

Travel and accommodation assistance for visits

In cases where there is financial hardship and the inmate is located at a long distance from the family member, financial assistance for the visitor's travel and accommodation may be available.

To apply for assistance, the family member must be a resident of NSW, receiving Centrelink benefits (e.g. unemployment, pension), visiting an inmate whose sentence is at least 6 months, and travelling a long distance, for example Sydney to Cooma. An application form can be obtained online from the CSNSW website or from the SAPO at the correctional centre.

What is SHINE for Kids?

SHINE for Kids is a community organisation that provides services for families and children with a parent in custody. SHINE currently operates nine Child and Family Centres located at the entrance of correctional centres in Bathurst, Cessnock, Junee, Kempsey, Parklea, Silverwater, Wellington, Windsor and Kariong. Inmates can access their services by asking for a referral form from the centre's SAPO.

Further information about the range of services and programs is available at www.shineforkids.org.au.

Further information

Further information about visiting an inmate is available in the booklet "*Visiting a Correctional Centre*" at the CSNSW website: www.correctiveservices.justice.nsw.gov.au