STAYING OUT
Information to help you out…

Contributing to a safer ACT Community
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If you have ideas about how to improve this booklet, ACTCS would welcome your feedback. Please contact us at GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601 or phone 02 6207 0888.

An electronic version of this guide is available from the website www.jcs.act.gov.au.

To the best of our knowledge, the information in this booklet was accurate as of April 2009.
MAKING A NEW START

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is a guide for you to use prior to your release to so that you can plan for events that may occur after you leave prison. You will find it a useful reference document.

Being released from prison and getting used to that freedom presents challenges. You will need to find somewhere to live, sort out if you can get payments from Centrelink, organise money and make contact with family and friends that you may not have seen since you went to prison.

These things can be stressful for someone who’s just been released. You may know of prisoners who, after being released from custody, end up back in prison sooner or later. But there are many others who succeed in making a new start.

This booklet is here to help you through this time.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This booklet is divided into a series of subjects that may be important to you. Each subject has a quick guide followed by more detailed information.

Use this booklet and the checklist to help you prepare before you are released and after as a reference guide. If you take this booklet with you when you leave prison, you’ll have easy access to phone numbers and information you may need later on.

Make notes or put tabs against the pages you find most useful.

ASK FOR HELP

If you are not coping or are feeling stressed and anxious talk to your case manager, case officer, services and programs officer, alcohol and other drugs worker, probation and parole officer or education staff. If you have questions about your health talk to the clinic staff or find a GP (General Practitioner) when you’re released who can support you, health staff may be able to help you find a GP in your local area.
MAKE THE MOST OF THE PRE-RELEASE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
You will have help preparing for your release from your case manager and case officer. You may have had visits from Legal Aid, Centrelink and Housing ACT. Make the most of these opportunities to plan your release and complete the checklist.

CONTACTING THE ORGANISATIONS LISTED - ACCESSING THE INTERNET
You’ll find internet sites listed for a number of the organisations. You can use these once you leave prison. If you don’t have access to the internet after you get out, you can get free internet access at most libraries. A complete list of ACT Library locations are listed in the section on education or go to www.library.act.gov.au.

All the information provided in this booklet was correct at time of going to print, but things can change over time. If there’s a difference between this booklet and what you’re told in your release preparation sessions, trust the information provided in the sessions.

REMEMBER: if you need help, ask for it.

GOOD LUCK!

Be prepared
Be aware and think ahead for ways you can avoid problems before they start. If you’re already feeling worked up, stay away from people and places that might make you feel worse. If it’s your mum’s place, she might see you’re not going so well and start nagging you and things will go from bad to worse. If you know that you have to go somewhere that might stress you, like a meeting with your ex, take some time to relax first so you have a clear head and a good attitude.

WHO TO CONTACT

Lifeline
In Person: Level 1, Novell House, 71 Northbourne Avenue Canberra ACT 2601
By Post: GPO Box 583 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.act.lifeline.org.au
Phone: 13 11 14

Salvation Army Counselling Service
In Person: Unit 3, Southwell Park Professional Centre, 9 Montford Crescent North Lyneham ACT 2602
Website: www.salvos.net
Phone: 6248 5504

To get phone numbers for other services call 1223. There may be a charge for this call if you’re not calling from a Telstra home phone.

1800 numbers are free from a fixed line. Some 1800 numbers can only be accessed from outside the metropolitan area or on a mobile phone. You’ll be charged for these calls if you use a mobile phone.

Check your local library for free internet access.
Take some deep breaths
If you can take some deep, slow breaths, it can really calm you down. You might not believe it when you first get told by your counsellor or doctor, but it really works. You’ll even start to notice then that when you do get worked up your breathing will get faster. Stop and take ten really slow, calm breathes.

Danger signs
You need to learn to read your danger signs so you can get away from a situation before it gets out of hand. Or if you can’t get away from it try to slow things down. You might hear your voice getting louder and you’ll start to feel hot and sweaty and tense up, like you’re getting a rush of energy. Try and stay in control, rather than letting your body take over.

True strength
You might think you have to prove that no one can get the better of you, but you need to tell yourself that it takes a really strong person to be in control of your own feelings and take charge of your life. It you let other people wind you up, you’re really just letting them run the show.

Be assertive
By trying to show that you’re in charge of every situation you might come across as really agro. In anger management courses they’ll talk about being assertive, rather then aggressive. You’ll have to work at it, but you’ll get better at talking about what you want without shouting at people or trying to scare them. People won’t think you’re a pushover if you’re not agro at them, and you’ll probably be able to get your point across more easily. A lot of the time you may even get better and quicker help from people because they’ll be listening to what you say and not trying to get you out of the door as fast as they can.

Do things to help you relax
You might want to start working out or doing some exercise because it can make you feel better if you are feeling frustrated and angry. Working out every day can help you to stay cool and in control. Working out isn’t for everyone but things like yoga, walking or swimming can work the same way.

Read through the questions below and decide which ones apply to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION:</th>
<th>YES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do I understand the conditions of my parole?</td>
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<td>Do I have all the ID I need?</td>
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<td>Have I organised my Centrelink payment for the day I get released?</td>
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<td>Do I know where to go for financial help?</td>
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<td>Do I know how I am getting home, or where I’m going to stay, on the day of my release?</td>
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<td>Have I organised somewhere long term to stay for when I get out?</td>
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<td>Have I arranged to see a doctor on release regarding my health issues?</td>
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<td>Do I have a plan to avoid using drugs or alcohol after I get out?</td>
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<td>Do I know where to get help if I’m not coping?</td>
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<td>Have I thought about how to cope with emotions like loneliness, depression or anger after I get out?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do I know how to go about looking for work after I get out?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have I thought what problems might arise when I return to my family?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have I organised everything I need to do on the day I get out?</td>
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GETTING SUPPORT

QUICK GUIDE

You may think that if you can handle prison you can handle anything, but many ex-prisoners have said that the first few weeks outside were actually harder than the time they spent in prison. Coping with money problems, dealing with other people, and feeling like you don’t fit in can be overwhelming. You may feel depressed and anxious and not want to leave your room. If the stress feels like it’s getting too much or is stopping you getting things done, it’s time to seek support.

WHO CAN HELP?

Listed for you are contact details of key agencies that provide help, sometimes free of charge (you need to check with individual services about fees). Telling services that you’ve been in prison can help them understand better what you’re going through. But it’s up to you to decide how much you feel you want to say.

MORE INFORMATION

If you’re worried that ‘losing your cool’ may be an issue for you, see the psychologist before you leave the AMC. You may be able to get onto a program before you’re released that can help you find other ways of coping with difficult situations.

There’s plenty to be frustrated about when you come out of prison. Particularly in the first couple of months, you may find yourself under intense pressure. Things will go wrong, fall through, or take longer than expected. You may feel like you’re constantly hitting your head against a brick wall. If you ‘lose it’ and lash out at someone, whether it’s your partner, your kids, a worker, or someone at the pub who you think is looking at you the wrong way, the next stop may be the lock up and then the remand centre.

Here are some tips about ways to keep your cool, even when times are tough:

Positive self talk
Learn to talk good stuff to yourself. If you get worked up letting yourself think things like “they’ve got it coming to them”. Say something to yourself like “I won’t let this get to me”, “I can handle this”, or just “chill”. If you think and talk to yourself like that you might find that you can calm down.

Think about consequences
Think about what will happen if you lose your cool. There’s no way you’d want to lose your freedom. When you’ve walked away from a situation give yourself a little pat on the back for keeping it together.

Time out
Sometimes you’ll just have to get away from the situation. You might be about to lose it with your boss, even just going to the loo to calm down can help. Sometimes at home you might just need to go for a walk until you feel calmer. The first 10 or 15 minutes you might not think about anything much, then on the way home you can start thinking about how you can handle things when you get back.
KEEPRING YOUR COOL

QUICK GUIDE

After you leave prison you may have lots of reasons to lose your cool, especially in the first few months when plans might fall through, people don’t understand, or you have to wait for things you need now.

Keeping your cool can help you keep your freedom. If you can find ways to avoid getting agro with others, it’s worth it.

It may help to:
- Remind yourself about what could happen if you lose it.
- Take time out.
- Take ten deep breaths.
- Stay away from people or places where you get agro.
- Find ways to relax and stay calm.

Anger management courses can help you learn more ways to do this:
- Talk to your probation and parole officer.
- Or call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Keep reading for:
- tips about ways to keep your cool
- more information about services that can help

WHO TO CONTACT

Alcohol and Drug Program – ACT Health
In Person: ACT Health Building, Corner Alinga and Moore Streets, Canberra ACT 2601
By Post: GPO Box 825 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.health.act.gov.au
Phone: 6207 9977

Care Financial Counselling Service
In Person: Shop 16, Level 1, Waldorf Building, 2 Akuna Street, Canberra ACT 2601
By Post: GPO Box 763 Civic Square ACT 2608
Website: www.carefsc.org
Phone: 6257 1788

G-Line Gambling Hotline
Phone: 1800 633 635

Gay and Lesbian Counselling and Community Services of Australia
Website: www.glccs.org.au
Phone: 1800 184 527 (between 7.30pm and 10.00pm)

AIDS Action Council of the ACT
In Person: Westlund House 16 Gordon Street Acton ACT 2601
By Post: GPO Box 229 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.aidsaction.org.au
Phone: 6257 2855

National Association for Loss and Grief ACT Inc
In Person: 50 Carson Street Macarthur ACT 2904
By Post: PO Box 5022 Chisholm ACT 2905
Email: nalagact@myway.com
Phone: 6292 6847
WHO TO CONTACT

Lifeline
In Person: Level 1, Novell House, 71 Northbourne Avenue Canberra ACT 2601
By Post: GPO Box 583 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.act.lifeline.org.au
Phone: 13 11 14

Menslink
In Person: 2 Light Street Griffith ACT 2603
By Post: PO Box 4147 Manuka ACT 2603
Website: www.menslink.org.au
Phone: 6239 4699

Mensline Australia (24 hours 7 days)
By Post: PO Box 2335 Footscray VIC 3011
Website: www.menslineaus.org.au
Phone: 1300 789 978

Mental Health Crisis Assessment and treatment Team
By Post: PO Box 11 Canberra Hospital Woden ACT 2606
Phone: 1800 629 354 (24 hour service) or 02 6205 1065

Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
By Post: PO Box 916 Dickson ACT 2602
Website: www.rapecrisis.org.au
Phone: 6247 8071

Salvation Army Community Services
In Person: 4 Hawdon Place Dickson ACT 2602
By Post: PO Box 1038 Dickson ACT 2602
Website: www.salvos.org.au
Phone: 6247 3635

Violence Against Women – Australia Says No To Violence Helpline
Website: www.australiasaysno.gov.au
Phone: 1800 200 526

To get phone numbers for other services call 1223. There may be a charge for this call if you’re not calling from a Telstra home phone.

1800 numbers are free from a fixed line. Some 1800 numbers can only be accessed from outside the metropolitan area or on a mobile phone. You’ll be charged for these calls if you use a mobile phone.

Check your local library for free internet access.
take a long time, even years, to get used to having so many choices and having to decide for yourself.

Getting help
If anxiety or depression are making it hard to get on with life, see a doctor. It may be helpful for you to take prescription medication for a period of time and/or talk through your feelings with a doctor or a counsellor or health professional. Using drugs or alcohol may make you feel better for a brief time, but they don’t keep helping in the longer term.

Signs that you may be anxious include:
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Feeling restless and agitated.
- Feeling sick.
- Losing your appetite.
- Panic attacks (feeling sweaty, shortness of breath, heart racing).

Signs that you may be depressed include:
- Feeling continually sad and hopeless.
- Not being able to enjoy anything in life (it all seems ‘grey’ or pointless).
- Having a lot of negative thoughts about life and yourself.
- Lacking motivation to do anything, even to get out of bed.
- Losing your appetite, or over-eating.
- Being unable to sleep, or sleeping too much.
- Thoughts of suicide.

You can expect to have some of these feelings as you adjust to life outside. However, if you find these feelings go on for more than a couple of months, or become so severe that you’re unable to function properly (feed yourself, meet parole commitments, etc), then seek help. Talk to your doctor or a worker you trust.

Women’s Information and Referral Centre
In Person: Ground Floor, London Court Canberra ACT 2601
By Post: WiRC DHCS GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.wirc.act.gov.au
Phone: 6205 1075

Relationships Australia Canberra and Region
In Person: 15 Napier Close Deakin ACT 2600
By Post: PO Box 320 Curtin ACT 2605
Website: www.relationships.com.au
Phone: 1300 364 277 or 02 6122 7100

Office for Children Youth and Family Support
Care and Protection Services
Website: www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs
Phone: 1300 556 729

To get phone numbers for other services call 1223. There may be a charge for this call if you’re not calling from a Telstra home phone.

1800 numbers are free from a fixed line. Some 1800 numbers can only be accessed from outside the metropolitan area or on a mobile phone. You’ll be charged for these calls if you use a mobile phone.

Check your local library for free internet access.
**HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION**

**QUICK GUIDE**

Stable accommodation will be difficult, if not impossible, to find if you wait until you’re released to start looking. With the shortage of cheap, available housing it is important to arrange a place to stay well before your release.

**Public Housing**

Housing ACT allocates, manages and maintains more than 11,000 public and community housing properties. It also coordinates comprehensive support services and community participation programs for its tenants.

More broadly, the ACT’s Department of Housing and Community Services provides support for people who are disadvantaged or experiencing a crisis. It does this through a variety of programs, including the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) that assists people experiencing homelessness.

From prison you can apply for public housing or check if you can go back to public housing if you were previously a public housing tenant.

Housing ACT may be able to give you help with bond money or support with rent payments.

**Crisis Accommodation**

The Canberra Emergency Accommodation Service Crisis Line provides confidential 24 hour telephone counselling, information on emergency accommodation and referral for people who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. For assistance you can phone the 24 hour phone service on 6257 2333.

**Keep reading for:**

- More information about public housing and other options
- Supported accommodation services
- Tenants’ advice services
- Useful phone numbers

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**You forget how busy and noisy things are**

You may have forgotten what it’s like outside. Driving away from prison at 60kph will feel like you’re speeding. And the first time you cross the road be careful you don’t get knocked over. Just take things slowly, and be careful, until you get used to it all again.

**You have to stop watching your back**

You will have to unlearn lots of things you did in prison that made you safe inside. Outside you won’t be able to keep track of everything the way you used to inside. When you go somewhere like the shops you’ll have to learn to relax and not check everybody out to see where they are and what they’re going to do. You’ll send yourself crazy if you try and keep up the same behaviours from when you were inside.

**Don’t push yourself too fast**

You might feel nervous about some places and people and feel like you need to pace yourself. If you try to do everything at once you might start to panic, get all sweaty and feel like you can’t breathe. Do things gradually, in small doses until you’re coping better. Learn how to calm yourself down, breathe slowly and deeply.

**It helps to get out of the house**

In the beginning you might feel so anxious being around people that you won’t want to go out much. Your flat or house might start to feel like another prison. You need to keep on top of it and not let things get worse by staying at home. Start by making sure you go out once day, even if it’s just to go and get the paper, or go for a walk. After a while it will get easier and you can go to more places and stay out longer.

**You have to learn to make decisions again**

You might feel really anxious whenever you have to make decisions. Inside all your decisions were made for you and you’ll be out of practice. Even a little decision like what to have for lunch might be too much for you some days. You may tend to let other people decide things for you, but eventually you’ll feel like they’re bossing you around, even though you wanted it that way. It’ll help not to worry too much about getting things right all the time. Most of the time it won’t matter what you decide, you just have to get used to making decisions without spending too much time worrying about it. It can
MORE INFORMATION

**Do you have ‘gate fever’?**
It’s normal to feel anxiety or ‘gate fever’ as the date of your release approaches. This is more likely the longer you’ve been inside.

As well as feeling excited about your release, you may also be feeling fearful that something will go wrong so that your release will be delayed, or that you won’t be able to make it once you’re released. You may notice physical signs of anxiety, like sleep problems or agitation.

It’s important you make practical plans for your release, but it’s often easier to deal with things if you can stay focused on the here and now, and take your preparations for being released step by step, a day at a time.

Here are some tips about dealing with the emotional side of being released.

**They don’t know where you’ve been**
At first you may feel like everyone can tell you’ve been in prison. You might feel different and think everyone else has you marked out. But after a while you’ll realise that most people are too busy to pay you much attention. Gradually you’ll stop feeling so separate and different and start feeling less worried that people will find you out.

**It’s normal for people to look you in the eye**
In prison you learn to look away so no one will get the wrong idea and think you want to take them on. You might not like it when you get out and people look you in the eye. You might even want to get in a fight and take these people on, thinking these people want to have a go at you just from that way they look at you. Eventually you’ll realise that they do it with everyone and it isn’t about you.

**You can’t take everything personally**
In the beginning you may think if something goes wrong it’s because people have it in for you. You may think that they know you’ve been in prison, they probably don’t have a clue. You just have to keep telling yourself that they’re just rude to everyone or they’re having a bad day. Just don’t get caught up in their stuff.

MORE INFORMATION

The best way to make sure you have stable accommodation is to start planning well before you’re released from prison.

**PUBLIC HOUSING**
Housing ACT provides cheap housing for people on low incomes or who have problems finding affordable housing or who need extra support. If you’re eligible you can apply for public housing and be placed on the waiting list. You then have to wait until a property becomes available. There’s a long waiting list for public housing and in some cases you may have to wait years, depending on the kind of housing you need and where you want to live.

**Public Housing Eligibility**
Each person is assessed individually.

- You must be 16 years or older.
- You must be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident.
- As from 13 November 2008 the income barriers applying to rental housing assistance are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Applicant</td>
<td>$539 gross per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family of two persons and joint tenancies</td>
<td>$674 gross per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family of three or more persons</td>
<td>$674 plus $89 each for the third, fourth, fifth person etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental Rebate</td>
<td>25% of gross weekly income</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Your personal assets (not counting furniture, clothing and one vehicle) must not be worth more than $40,000.
- You must not own any residential property.
- These conditions apply when you register for assistance, while you are on the applicant list, and when you are allocated a dwelling.
Eligibility for Early (Emergency/Priority) Allocation of Housing
If you have an urgent or special housing need, you may be eligible for priority housing.

People approved for early allocation are provided with accommodation more quickly than other people who are already registered on the applicant list for housing - that is why early allocation is only offered in special circumstances. Consideration may be given if you have a special housing need if your circumstances include:

- homelessness;
- mental health or medical issues;
- disability, including frail aged;
- women and children escaping domestic violence;
- indigenous persons facing complex issues;
- children at risk, including their parents and carers.

Application forms are available from Housing ACT

Can I apply for public housing while I’m in prison?
You can apply for public housing while you’re in prison. You need to get an application form from your case manager; they can also help you fill it in. Or ask to speak to staff from Housing ACT when they visit the AMC. You should let Housing ACT know when you leave the AMC, and also let them know when you change address or phone number when you’re out of prison.

There is a long waiting list for public housing, so you’ll need to look at other options as well.

Six to eight weeks before your release date make sure you let Housing ACT know that you’re leaving prison. You’ll need to have somewhere to go when you first leave prison as you’ll have to wait until Housing ACT can find you a property to rent. Waiting times will depend on the area where you want to live and whether you’re eligible for emergency housing.

Housing ACT Applicant Services Centre
Housing ACT, Applicant Services Centre is located at Nature Conservation House, Corner of Emu Bank and Benjamin Way Belconnen.

COPING WITH ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

QUICK GUIDE

It’s normal to feel anxious or depressed as you get ready to leave prison and in the months following your release.

You may:

- have difficulty sleeping;
- eat more or less than usual;
- feel sick, or have difficulty breathing;
- feel agitated, restless or panicky;
- find you don’t have the energy to do things;
- feel negative, and that everything is too hard;
- feel fearful that people know that you’ve been in prison;
- find it hard to make decisions.

If you:

- have these kinds of feelings without a break for three weeks or more, or
- can’t do basic things like feed yourself or go to parole appointment because you feel so bad; or
- just want help so you cope better;

Talk to your doctor or a support service, or call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Keep reading for:

- tips on coping with the emotional side of leaving prison
WHO TO CONTACT

Lifeline
In Person: Level 1, Novell House, 71 Northbourne Avenue Canberra ACT 2601
By Post: GPO Box 583 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.act.lifeline.org.au
Phone: 13 11 14

Salvation Army Counselling Service
In Person: Unit 3, Southwell Park Professional Centre, 9 Montford Crescent North Lyneham ACT 2602
Website: www.salvos.net
Phone: 6248 5504

Clients may attend the Applicant Services Centre to access information regarding Housing ACT services or apply for public housing or rental bond loan assistance in the ACT. A courtesy telephone is available for maintenance issues.

Contacting Housing ACT
Clients may contact Housing ACT by phoning 13 DHCS (13 34 27). Your call will be answered by a client service professional, who will ascertain the appropriate person to assist with your enquiry. Your call will then be transferred to the appropriate area within Housing ACT.

A free Housing ACT courtesy telephone is installed at the Tuggeranong Canberra Connect Shopfront and within the City and Phillip Health Centres.

You may also continue to contact your Housing Manager or Client Service Officers directly regarding tenancy matters. If you do not know these direct numbers, you can receive assistance by telephoning 13 34 27.

Writing to Housing ACT
Applications for assistance, rental rebate forms and general correspondence may be posted to:
Housing ACT
Locked Bag 3000
Belconnen ACT 2617

A courtesy Housing ACT mailbox is located within the Tuggeranong Canberra Connect Shopfront and the City and Phillip Health Centres. Clients are able to submit applications for housing assistance, rent rebate renewals and general correspondence for Housing ACT through this service.

Housing ACT Outreach
Housing ACT staff will continue to meet with clients in their homes, the Applicant Service Centre or other suitable venues by arrangement. Clients wishing to arrange a meeting with their Housing Manager or Applicant Support Officer should contact Housing ACT on 13 DHCS (13 34 27).

To get phone numbers for other services call 1223. There may be a charge for this call if you’re not calling from a Telstra home phone.

1800 numbers are free from a fixed line. Some 1800 numbers can only be accessed from outside the metropolitan area or on a mobile phone. You’ll be charged for these calls if you use a mobile phone.

Check your local library for free internet access.
WHO TO CONTACT

Housing ACT
In Person: Applicant Services Centre, Ground Floor, Nature Conservation House, Corner Benjamin Way and Emu Bank Belconnen Town Centre ACT 2617
By Post: Housing ACT, Locked Bag 3000 Belconnen ACT 2617
Office Hours: 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday
Website: www.dhcs.act.gov.au/hsc
Phone: 13 34 27

Housing ACT – Maintenance
02 6207 1500 (24 hours)

ACT Office of Fair Trading
02 6207 0400

ACTEW - AGL
02 6248 3111

Centrelink – Rent Assistance
Employment Services
13 28 50
Youth and Student Services
13 24 90
Family Assistance Office
13 61 50
Disability, Sickness and Carers
13 27 17
Retirement Services
13 23 00
In languages other than English
13 12 02
TTY* enquiries Freecall
1800 810 586
*TTY is only for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment.
A TTY phone is required to use this service

Some ideas about meeting new people

- You could do a course at the local community centre on something like using the internet. You’d be meeting the same people each week and can have a bit of a chat afterwards. You may not make any new long term friends but you’ll feel more confident when you’re in a group of people after the course.
- Take up a sport. You may not have played in a footy team for ages, and you’ll be nervous when you first sign up with the local club. You may even feel uncomfortable for a few weeks and be pretty quiet, but it will get better. There may be others on the team who are new, just like you, and you’ll find that they’ll take time to fit in with the group.
- Do some volunteer work and get to know people that way. The group may also get together socially and you can choose to join in with those events as well.
Talk to people supporting you about your expectations for life on the outside, and follow this up with them when you get out. Having someone to call when things get difficult can be a real help.

Don’t forget that you can always call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

**Old mates and new mates**

A lot of prisoners who want to go straight when they come out worry about seeing old associates from criminal or drug-using circles. They know if they hang around those people, there’s a strong chance that they’ll end up re-offending. On the other hand, if they don’t see any of their old associates, they’ll have nobody. At least with their old connections they feel comfortable and know the score.

There are no easy answers to this one. Building up a new circle of friends is not easy, but it can be done. Here are a few tips:

- Make it clear to your mates that you don’t want to fall back into old ways, but don’t rely on them to make it easy for you. People who are still using or breaking the law are more likely to want to drag you back down than wish you well in your new life. That’s reality. After all, if you succeed, they might feel uncomfortable about their own lives.
- Be selective about who you keep in contact with. It’s not hard to tell who is good for you and who means trouble. Another person who’s also committed to staying out can be a great help. Build on your contacts with those prisoners who you believe are likely to stay out and who are serious about going straight.
- If you’re going to meet someone who still uses drugs, think about how and when you have contact. It might be better to see a person in a café rather than in their lounge room, where it’s all too easy to light up that bong or have that hit.
- Form a relationship with a support worker you can trust. Although workers are professional people who are paid to help you, a real bond of trust can develop.
- NA, AA and other 12-step programs have a ‘sponsoring’ system in which more experienced members of the program provide support and guidance to newer members. If you have drug or alcohol problems, attend a meeting and see if there’s someone there you like. They may be able to sponsor you.
ACCESSING CENTRELINK SUPPORT

QUICK GUIDE

Centrelink staff will visit the AMC regularly. You can apply for a Crisis Payment and an Advance Payment up to 21 days before your release. This way you’ll have money when you leave prison.

You must be entitled to a Centrelink pension or benefit on your release to receive a Crisis and or Advance Payment.

If you don’t see Centrelink staff before your release, make contact to claim payment as soon as you do leave the AMC by visiting a Centrelink office with your Notification of Discharge from Custody or by phoning Centrelink on 13 10 21.

Even if you don’t have all of your ID, tell Centrelink you want to claim a payment as the payment may be calculated from the day you make contact.

Keep reading for:
- details of Centrelink payments
- how to avoid your payments being stopped
- who to contact if you’re having trouble accessing Centrelink support

MORE INFORMATION

Lots of ex-prisoners feel isolated and lonely once they leave prison, especially if they aren’t living with family. Some people have ended up re-offending just to return to prison where they know people and don’t feel out of place. Meeting people and making friends is hard for most people, and it’s even more difficult when you’ve been in prison.

Your ‘prison self’

In prison you may have acted tough, hiding your feelings so that no one thought you were an easy target. Being like that protected you and helped keep you safe. But outside prison behaving that way isn’t necessary and may scare people off. What you need to ‘make it’ in the community is the very opposite of what cuts it inside. Being open and friendly is more likely to get you what you want than behaving as you would in prison.

To get to know people and make some friends you’ll have to slowly take a few risks and open up to people.

Small talk

Talking about the weather, the football or what you did on the weekend doesn’t happen in prison much. In fact, what passes for normal conversation in the general community can seem trivial and annoying when you’ve spent time in prison, where survival was the main concern. Learning what people in the community talk about takes time, and feels strange.

It will take time to get used to the different social rules that operate outside prison. Listen to other people. How do they start a conversation? What gets talked about? You’ll soon get the hang of it. Don’t forget that most people, ‘straight’ people included, feel shy or don’t know what to say from time to time.

Choose a support person

While you’re in custody, you can choose to have a meeting with a person who’ll be your key support when you get out. They could be a family member, trusted friend, or community member.
OVERCOMING ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

QUICK GUIDE

Feeling isolated and lonely is very common after you’ve left prison.

In prison you didn’t expect to open up to people and enjoy their company. Now you’re outside it takes time to relax and be friendly to people.

Small talk doesn’t happen much in prison, and once you leave it takes time to learn what to talk about, and how to chat.

Having someone who can support you during the first months when you leave prison can really help. If you don’t have family or a friend who can do this, look for a support service that may be able to help.

If your aim is to go straight, you may not want to hang around your old mates, but you may feel like you don’t have anyone else. If you’ve got a mate who also wants to go straight, you can support each other.

If you need someone to talk to right now, ring Lifeline on 13 11 14 for 24-hour confidential telephone counselling.

Keep reading for:
• More ideas about meeting new people and dealing with old mates

MORE INFORMATION

Sorting out Centrelink payments will be really important for most people leaving prison. Your first contact with Centrelink will usually be when a Centrelink staff member visits you in prison before your release. Talking to Centrelink before you’re released can make getting payments easier. If you haven’t seen Centrelink and are about to be released, see your case manager or case officer. They can help you contact Centrelink on 13 10 21 to make an appointment for you on the day you get out (or the next working day).

What is a Crisis Payment?
When you get out of prison you will need money to pay for things like clothes, food or finding somewhere to live. If you are in financial hardship, you may be able to get a one-off Crisis Payment to help with these costs in addition to your Centrelink benefit or pension. You will need to ask the Centrelink worker how much your Crisis Payment will be.

To claim Crisis Payment you must:
• be eligible for income support payments from Centrelink;
• have been in prison at least 14 days;
• apply for the payment within seven days of your release (or up to three weeks before release);
• be experiencing severe financial hardship;
• have your prison release papers (Notification of Discharge from Custody) if you apply after leaving prison.

Your Crisis Payment can be paid:
• by cheque;
• with an Electronic Benefits Transfer card, which can be used in selected ATMs;
• into a bank account.

Advance Payment
When you complete the claim form for Crisis Payment you can also apply to receive an advance payment of half your first regular income support payment on release. If you get a Crisis Payment and Advance Payment the day you’re released, your first regular payment after that will only be one week’s amount, and that will have to last a fortnight.
It’s not easy to get by on this amount without extra support but there are other services that may be able to assist.

Claiming a Centrelink Payment
You don’t need an appointment to put in a claim for a payment. Phone 13 28 50, visit your local Centrelink office or go to www.centrelink.gov.au

To claim, you’ll need to provide 100 points of ID. See the section on Getting ID for more information.

Even if you don’t have all your ID ready, it’s worth letting Centrelink know you want to claim. Your payment may be calculated from the date you first advised Centrelink that you wanted to claim once your claim is approved. You’ll then have 14 days to give Centrelink all your completed forms and have any necessary interviews. Let Centrelink know in advance if you’re having problems returning the forms within 14 days.

You might also be eligible for Rent Assistance. This is an extra payment to help you cover private rent (including boarding houses, etc). You need to show Centrelink a lease or Rent Certificate saying how much rent you pay. Ask the Centrelink staff how to apply.

Claiming Newstart Allowance
Most people leaving prison will claim Newstart Allowance. If you’re under 21 you may be able to claim Youth Allowance, which has similar conditions.

After you contact Centrelink you’ll be required to attend an appointment about returning to work. This may be with a Job Network agency, which can help you find work, or for a Job Capacity Assessment, to identify what help you need to be ready for work. You MUST attend this meeting for your claim for Newstart to be approved.

To receive Newstart you must be willing to enter into an Activity Agreement. This agreement may be with Centrelink, or with an employment support service. Make sure you understand the requirements of your Activity Agreement.

WHO TO CONTACT

Relationships Australia Canberra and Region
In Person: 15 Napier Close Deakin ACT 2600
By Post: PO Box 320 Curtin ACT 2605
Website: www.relationships.com.au
Phone: 1300 364 277 or 6122 7100

Lifeline
In Person: Level 1, Novell House, 71 Northbourne Avenue Canberra ACT 2601
By Post: GPO Box 583 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.act.lifeline.org.au
Phone: 1300 364 277 or 6122 7100

Parentlink
By Post: GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.parentlink.act.gov.au
Phone: 1334 27

Kids Helpline (24 hours)
By Post: PO Box 2000, Milton QLD 4064
Website: www.kidshelp.com.au
Phone: 1800 551 800

To get phone numbers for other services call 1223. There may be a charge for this call if you’re not calling from a Telstra home phone.

1800 numbers are free from a fixed line. Some 1800 numbers can only be accessed from outside the metropolitan area or on a mobile phone. You’ll be charged for these calls if you use a mobile phone.

Check your local library for free internet access.
often try to control them or monitor their behaviour in various ways. If your parents do this, remember it’s because they care about you. However, feeling that you’re being watched over, or that your parents don’t trust you, can be hard. You can even feel tempted to do something rash just to break out. Remember that the decision not to re-offend or use drugs is about what you want for your life. You’re not doing it just to please them.

Tell your parents what’s helpful and not helpful for you in terms of support. It may be useful for them to hear from you how what they do affects you. Remember that while you live in your parents’ house it’s reasonable for them to expect you to live by their rules. If you can’t do this, then you’ll need to look for your own place. If that’s the case, read the section on Housing and Accommodation.

Claiming a Disability Pension
If you have a significant physical, intellectual or psychiatric disability which affects your ability to work, you may be able to claim a Disability Support Pension (DSP). The requirements for DSP are very strict. If you think you might be eligible, ask Centrelink for more information.

Claiming a Parenting Payment
You can apply for a Parenting Payment if you’re a sole parent or if your partner receives a Centrelink pension or benefit. You can only receive a Parenting Payment until your youngest child is six years old (if you have a partner) or eight years old (if you’re a sole parent). Parents of older children may be eligible for Newstart Allowance.

Talk to Centrelink staff about expectations on parents to look for part-time work once their children reach school age.

Concessions
Eligibility for some Centrelink payments means you are also eligible for a Health Care Card. Ask Centrelink if you are eligible. You can use this to get discounts on medication and to see some doctors for free. If you need this card straight away, they can issue you with a temporary one over the counter.

To get a pensioner’s price on public transport you’ll need a current pension card. If you’re not on a pension you may be able to get a half fare entitlement (concession card) through Centrelink. Ask the Centrelink staff about this when you apply for your payment.

How can I avoid having payments stopped?
To avoid a non-payment period it’s important to:
- Go to all appointments at Centrelink or to any other services Centrelink directs you to attend to help you find work, or get ready to work.
- Let Centrelink or the other services know beforehand if you can’t attend; ask for a new appointment, and attend then.
- Contact Centrelink or the other services immediately if you forget or miss an appointment.
- Read all mail from Centrelink or other organisations such as employment services, and respond if you’re asked by mail to do something.
- Keep to your Activity Agreement.
- Tell Centrelink if you change your address.
What Ifs

What if I’ve been in for less than 14 days?
If you’ve been in prison for less than 14 days, you can’t get a Crisis Payment. However, 14 days includes time spent in police custody and remand. Your release papers may only have the dates you arrived and left prison. If you spent a few days in the cells and this brings it up to 14, tell the Centrelink worker where and when you were originally picked up so they can verify it.

What if I owe Centrelink money?
If you’re in debt to Centrelink, you can still apply for payments. You can pay back your debt in instalments. Usually this will start in the second fortnight, but if you think this will make things hard for you, talk to Centrelink. Having a debt doesn’t stop you from qualifying for payments.

What if I had a non-payment penalty before I went to prison?
Centrelink payments can be stopped for eight weeks if you haven’t met participation requirements. If you’ve been in prison more than eight weeks, the penalty period will be over. Otherwise check with Centrelink about your eligibility for a payment or other assistance.

What if I don’t have a bank account?
Centrelink can give you a Statement of Intention to Pay Benefits, which you can then use to open a bank account at most major banks.

Specialist Job Network services
Centrelink may ask you to attend services which can give you additional support to find employment. This could include intensive one-to-one help, training for job interview, assistance if you have a disability, or specialist services for young people.

Personal Support Program
Centrelink may arrange for you to attend a Personal Support Program (PSP). PSP is run by community-based organisations that provide direct support and services to participants. The aim is to overcome barriers to joining the workforce such as homelessness or drug or gambling issues.

Be prepared for the noise and mess that children make.
In prison, the one thing you have control over is your cell. If you always kept your cell spotless, you may find it difficult to cope with children who leave toys around and yell and scream. It can be hard to remember that this is normal behaviour for children. You can teach them to tidy up after themselves, but you can’t stop them behaving like children. Insisting on having complete control over your environment will only create more stress for you and them.

Will you be a single parent after you’re released?
It can be hard enough to look after yourself in the early days post-release, let alone a demanding child. Some children may become particularly ‘clingy’ when their parent returns home from prison. This may be due to their fear of being separated again. It’s important to get support if you feel you or your children aren’t coping. Don’t wait until things build up to the point where lash out at the children, take drugs or do something else that might hurt you or your children. Lots of places, like your local library, will have free activities for your children that may help you all to cope better.

Returning to parents
Living with parents after your release can have practical, emotional and financial advantages but it can also be stressful. Parents of ex-prisoners often worry that their son or daughter is going to re-offend or use drugs again. They

Remember that they need to hear from you that you do love them. Try not to be too hurt if they give you a hard time. They won’t understand that you didn’t mean to go to prison, and they may feel that you’ve let them down. Listen and try to understand how your children feel rather than being defensive. They’ll settle down if you can be patient and are prepared to work to regain their trust.

Perhaps some other family member took on the parenting role while you were in prison. You may need to regain their trust, as well as your children’s, as you and the person who has been looking after your children work out exactly what roles each of you’ll play in your children’s lives. If your child was placed in their care through a court order, you may benefit from legal advice to find out what steps would be involved in resuming their care.

Returning to a place of rehab (if any)
If you’ve been in prison for a long time, you may have lost touch with your community. Some prisons encourage people to get involved with the local community. If you’re released from a prison, you can start by calling up your local community groups, such as sports clubs or schools. You can also get in touch with your local community development officer (CDO) to find out what resources are available in your area.

Living with your family
Living with your family after your release can be a challenge. You may need to re-establish relationships with your family and friends. It may be hard to talk about how you’ve been feeling and how you’ve been coping. You may need to set boundaries and communicate your needs clearly. It’s important to take care of yourself and to seek support when you need it.

Financial support
You may be eligible for financial support after your release. This can help you to get back on your feet and to support yourself and your family. You can contact your local Centrelink office to find out about the financial support available to you.

Finding a job
Finding a job after your release can be challenging. You may have lost your job or had to take a break from your work. You may need to update your CV and skills. You may need to start looking for work again. You can contact your local Jobs Centre or contact local employers to find out about job opportunities.

Ending your substance use
Substance use can be a big problem for people who have been in prison. You may need to work on ending your substance use to help you to live a healthy and fulfilling life. You can contact your local addiction support organisation to find out about the support available to you.

Raising your children
Raising your children can be a challenge after your release. You may need to set boundaries and communicate your needs clearly. It’s important to take care of yourself and to seek support when you need it.

Remember that you’re not alone. There are organisations and support groups that can help you to cope. They can provide you with information and support.

Remember to take things one step at a time. It’s important to be patient and to give yourself time to adapt. You can start by focusing on one area of your life at a time. For example, you can focus on rebuilding your relationships with your family and friends. You can also start by finding a job and then work on finding a place to live.

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Did you start your relationship while in prison?
A relationship that starts in prison can be very intense, because you often have a lot of time to focus on it, and few distractions. Even if you know each other really well, there’ll still be more to learn when you’re able to spend more time with each other. You may find it hard if you learn things about each other that you weren’t expecting.

You may feel prison has changed you, or you may be confused by your feelings and behaviour.
Being withdrawn or having mood swings and angry outbursts are common. It’s all part of the difficult process of readjusting from prison life to family life. Suddenly you’re faced with a whole new set of demands. What helps people survive in prison may be unhelpful back home. In prison, violence and intimidation are often used to ‘solve’ conflict. At home, those tactics could destroy your relationship with your family and even land you back inside. The skills of listening and open communication are essential to a good relationship.

If you do find yourself having problems, relationship or family counselling can help sort things out. Use the Who to Contact pages at the end of this section for more information. Don’t wait until the relationship is on the rocks or your family is falling apart to seek help. It’s better to see someone early, when things are easier to sort out.

There may also be relationship and family programs available to you while you’re still inside. Take advantage of them.

Returning to your children

Will your children be living with you all or some of the time after your release?
Children can react in lots of different ways when a parent comes home from prison. They may be extremely happy, but they may also be upset and confused because you were away for so long. Any changes can be unsettling for children. Younger children may not remember a time when you were at home with them. Older children may have taken on family responsibilities, and for a time may resent the changes that come when their mother or father returns home.

WHO TO CONTACT

Centrelink
To apply for a payment:
13 28 50
Indigenous Customer Service:
13 10 21
Employment Services:
13 28 50
Disability, Sickness and Carers:
13 27 17
Family Assistance Office:
13 61 50
Youth and Student Services:
13 24 90
Multilingual Call:
13 12 02
TTY:
1800 810 586

Internet:
www.centrelink.gov.au

Local Centrelink Offices
WODEN
90 Corinna Street, WODEN ACT 2606
Postal Address: PO Box 274 Woden ACT 2606
General Hours:
Monday 8am – 5pm
Tuesday 8am – 5pm
Wednesday 8am – 5pm
Thursday 8am – 5pm
Friday 8am – 5pm
Saturday Closed
Sunday Closed
MORE INFORMATION

Prisoners often really look forward to returning to their family. But many ex-prisoners say that after the ‘honeymoon period’ is over things may not go smoothly.

Before your release you may be able to arrange a family conference where you can talk through issues about living together. Talk to your Case Officer if you think this would be helpful.

Chaplains can also provide support if you’re worried about returning to your family. Ask for an appointment with the chaplain to talk about your concerns.

Below are a few tips on dealing with some of the problems that might occur.

Returning to your partner

What do you expect of your partner after you’re released?
Picking up where you left off in a relationship may be more difficult than you expect. You and your partner will have adjusted to living apart. It’s understandable that you both may feel anxious about living together again. You may not be sure how you’ll get started with even everyday things like having sex and working out money.

The key is to talk to your partner about your ideas and hopes before you get out, and keep talking after your release. It’s easy to get carried away inside prison with ideas about what it will be like when you get back together. If your partner tells you you’re being unrealistic or getting carried away, listen. He or she is probably more in touch about this than you are.

What if you had relationship problems before you went to prison?
Any problems in your relationship before you went to prison will probably still be there when you get out. If, for example, your relationship was violent or there were lots of arguments, you may find these patterns return after your release, even though you may have hoped they’d be different. If thing aren’t working out, it’s important to seek help.

Note: The Career Information Centre is a career and course library, and NOT a centre which can process payments.
RETURNING TO FAMILY

QUICK GUIDE

If you’re returning to your partner:
• it’s normal to feel anxious about living together again;
• talk about your hopes and plans before release;
• keep talking once you go home;
• listen to them;
• get help early if you’re having relationship problems.

Returning to your children:
• Be prepared for the children to take a while to get used to you being back at home.
• Try to be patient and understanding – they aren’t old enough to understand how you feel.
• Remember children are often messy and noisy – this is normal, although it may take time for you to get used to it.
• You may need to rebuild trust with your children and the people who’ve been caring for them.
• Get help early if you’re finding it difficult to cope with your children.

Returning to live with your parents:
• Parents may keep checking up on you because they’re worried that you may use drugs or re-offend.
• It can help to remember they’re checking because they care about you.
• Let them know how you feel, and what’s helpful for you.
• If you and your parents can’t agree about expectations, you may find it better to move into other accommodation.

Programs in prison may help you work on parenting and communication skills. Chaplains can also provide support if you’re concerned about returning to your family.

Keep reading for:
• more information about returning to family
• phone numbers for services which can help

To get phone numbers for other services call 1223. There may be a charge for this call if you’re not calling from a Telstra home phone.

1800 numbers are free from a fixed line. Some 1800 numbers can only be accessed from outside the metropolitan area or on a mobile phone. You’ll be charged for these calls if you use a mobile phone.

Check your local library for free internet access.
GETTING ID

QUICK GUIDE

Start early. If you don’t have identification (ID), it takes time to get enough together to apply to Centrelink and open a bank account.

Ask for help from your case officer or case manager.

Remember some ID is free, e.g. Medicare Card.

A birth certificate or certificate of residency or citizenship is a really useful form of ID.

Centrelink and banks give points for different kinds of ID.

Check how many points you need, and what points you can get for your ID.

Apply for ID even if someone outside is holding ID papers you might need, so you can be sure you’ll have it when you need it.

You can usually check what the ID requirements will be for a particular organisation online. This can help you to know what ID you need before you leave prison.

To get phone numbers for other services call 1223. There may be a charge for this call if you’re not calling from a Telstra home phone.

1800 numbers are free from a fixed line. Some 1800 numbers can only be accessed from outside the metropolitan area or on a mobile phone. You’ll be charged for these calls if you use a mobile phone.

Check your local library for free internet access.
City Health Centre  
Moore Street Canberra City  

Phillip Health Centre  
Corner Keltie and Corrina Streets Phillip

Tuggeranong Health Centre  
Corner Anketel and Pitman Streets Greenway

Narrabundah Health Centre  
Boolimba Crescent Narrabundah

**Syringe Vending Machines**  
Belconnen Health Centre  
Corner Swanson Street and Benjamin Way Belconnen

City Health Centre  
Moore Street Canberra City

Phillip Health Centre  
Corner Keltie and Corrina Streets Woden

Tuggeranong Health Centre  
Corner Anketel and Pitman Streets

**ACT Pharmacy Outlets**  
Ainslie (Blue Bell) 7 Edgar Street Ainslie  
Campbell Pharmacy 32 Blamey Place Campbell  
Charnwood (Capital) Shop 5 Charnwood Shops  
Chisholm (Capital) Benham Street Chisholm  
City Market Chemart Shop Canberra Centre Bunda Street City Markets  
City David Moses Pharmacy Shop 1 Canberra Arcade Corner West Row and Alinga Street  
City Develins Shop 3-4 Garema Place Canberra City  
City Pye’s Pharmacy Plus Shop CG 32 Canberra Centre  
Curtin (Capital) 42 Curtin Place Curtin Shops  
Deakin Pharmacy Duff Place Deakin Shops

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### MORE INFORMATION

#### An ID checklist

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<th>ID required to get it</th>
<th>Points value for Centrelink</th>
<th>Points to open a bank account</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<td>AMC staff can assist you with this</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>$36*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of Australian Citizenship/Residency</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>$55-$70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference from prison, probation and parole officer or from lawyer who’s known you for more than two years</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare Card</td>
<td>Letter of verification and copy of your PIC if you apply while still in prison</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage certificate</td>
<td>AMC staff can assist you with this</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>*$36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth certificate of your child (under 18)</td>
<td>AMC staff can assist you with this</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>*$36</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver’s licence or learner’s permit</td>
<td>AMC staff can assist you with this</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATM card or passbook</td>
<td>100 points</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current bank account statement</td>
<td>Varies between banks; check with AMC staff</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education certificate / Trade certificate</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination notice or separation certificate from a former employer</td>
<td>None, if you contact employer directly</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cost in ACT. All costs correct at time of publication. Note: this is not a complete list of ID options available for all services you may access.

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health  
In person: 63 Boolimba Crescent Narrabundah ACT 2604  
Website: [www.winnunga.org.au](http://www.winnunga.org.au)  
Phone: 6284 6222

Salvation Army Canberra  
In person: 1 Elder Street Braddon ACT 2612  
By post: GPO Box 435 Canberra ACT 2601  
Website: [www.canberracity.salvos.org.au](http://www.canberracity.salvos.org.au)  
Phone: 6248 7191

Toora Women Inc  
Website: [www.toora.org.au](http://www.toora.org.au)  
Phone: 6247 2399

Needle and Syringe Program Outlets

**Primary NSPs**  
City Health Building  
Moore Street Canberra City  
Phone: 6247 5230

Phillip Health Centre  
Corinna Street Woden  
Phone: 6285 3223

**Secondary NSPs**  
Aids Action and SWOP  
Westlund House Acton

The Junction Youth Health Services  
Griffin Centre Canberra City

Community Health Alcohol & Drug Program  
Health Building Moore Street Canberra City

Belconnen Health Centre  
Corner Swanson Street & Benjamin Way Belconnen
WHO TO CONTACT

Directions ACT
In Person: 1 Bradley Street Woden ACT 2606
By Post: PO Box 538 Woden ACT 2606
Website: www.directionsact.com
Phone: 6122 8000

ACT Health – Alcohol and Drug Program
In Person: ACT Health Building, corner Alinga and Moore Streets Canberra City ACT 2601
By Post: GPO Box 825 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.health.act.gov.au
Phone: 6207 9977

Alcohol and Drug Foundation
Karralika Therapeutic Community
By Post: PO Box 2230 Tuggeranong ACT 2901
Website: www.adfact.org
Phone: 6292 2733

Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA)
In person: Level 1, Sydney Building, 112-116 Alinga Street Canberra City ACT 2601
By post: GPO Box 5078 Braddon ACT 2612
Office hours: 10:00am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday
Website: www.cahma.apex.net.au
Phone: 6279 1670

Ted Noffs Foundation
In person: 350 Antill Street Watson ACT 2602
Website: www.noffs.org.au
Phone: 6123 2400

Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation
In person: Grattan Circuit Wanniassa ACT 2903
By post: PO Box 307 Erindale Centre ACT 2903
Website: www.gugan-gulwan.com.au
Phone: 6231 9555

GETTING ID

Once you leave prison you’ll need to have ID which is sometimes called ‘proof of identity’. You’ll need it to claim Centrelink payments, open a bank account, get a driver’s licence and get on the Housing ACT waiting list. If you don’t have ID now, it will take time to get hold of the documents you’ll need.

Getting ID can be a frustrating task. It can be hard to get ID if you don’t already have documentation. If you start early, even six months before you’re due to leave, you won’t have the pressure of trying to get ID after you leave, when you’ll have other things to do. You can also make the most of the help you can get from case management or services and program staff while you’re in AMC.

Some organisations may visit the AMC, and the AMC has information sessions to help you plan ahead. Ask service and program officers for more information.

HOW MUCH ID WILL I NEED?

The point system
To open a bank account or apply for a Medicare Card or birth certificate you need to show some ID. Most often, you need 100 points of ID. Organisations like banks and Centrelink have their own lists of ID and their points value. Each organisation decides how many points you need to satisfy their ID checks. There’s no one system of points. You need to check with each organisation about the points you need, and the number of points you can get for different kinds of ID. You can usually check what the ID requirements will be for a particular organisation online.

ID for Centrelink
For most Centrelink payments, you need:
- Proof of birth in Australia or proof of arrival in Australia (a birth certificate, passport or citizenship certificate); and
- 100 points of identification from an approved list of documents. (If you have received Centrelink payments before, you may not have to provide as many points.)
Release papers or prison ID will not count, nor will a reference from a lawyer or community corrections officer.

If you can’t get hold of enough ID for Centrelink, phone Centrelink on 1800 050 004 or visit your nearest Centrelink office. You may be able to establish your identity by Centrelink staff asking you some questions that only you can answer correctly.

**ID to open a bank account**

Different banks may have slightly different ID requirements.

The following are acceptable for at least some banks:
- Birth certificate or passport
- Written reference from the prison verifying your identity

If you have both of these, you may be able to open a bank account.

If you don’t have a bank account when you apply for Centrelink benefits, it may be possible to get a Statement of Intention to Pay Benefits. You can take this to the bank to open an account.

**Medicare Card**

A Medicare Card is free, and worth 20 points of ID for Centrelink claims. Medicare staff may at times visit the AMC to assist you in getting a card.

Call Medicare to see if you’re already enrolled, and ask whether you need a new or replacement card. Ask them to send you the form you need. Or once you get out, go to a Medicare office and apply there. To contact Medicare or find your nearest office phone 13 20 11.

A Medicare Card means you can get free or cheaper health care at a hospital or from a doctor. You also need a Medicare Card to get into most rehabs.

- Use a tourniquet that’s easy to release and make sure you release it before injecting.
- After injecting, keep your arm straight and apply pressure to the injecting site with a clean tissue/cotton ball for a couple of minutes to help reduce bruising and bleeding. Don’t use a swab to wipe the site after injecting as this can actually encourage bleeding (swabs contain alcohol).
- Always dispose of your used fit in a ‘sharps’ disposal bin or at an NSP. Never reuse a fit, because a blunt and dirty fit can increase the risk of infections and vein problems.
- Clean up any blood with a clean tissue and water (soapy water if available).
- Throw away any old swabs and filters in a double plastic bag. Don’t reuse them.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after each hit.
- Rotate injection sites. Alternate the site every time you inject. Give the skin and vein time to recover.
- Rubbing Lasonil or Hirudoid cream into the injection site after about ten minutes can help to reduce bruising and swelling.
If you hit an artery:
- Pull out immediately.
- Apply firm pressure for at least half an hour.
- Raise the affected area if possible.
- Lie down.
- Contact a doctor or ring 000 for an ambulance.

Avoid injecting into your groin, neck, hands and feet. Avoid the veins below the waist as they can lead to serious circulation problems if damaged. When injecting into a vein, inject with the blood flow (towards the heart). Make sure there’s adequate light when injecting. Blast slowly and pull out if you experience any pain, discomfort or swelling. If your veins are blocked, consider another method of taking your drug, such as sniffing, swallowing, smoking or stuffing.

Avoiding infection and other problems
Even with new syringes, if you don’t inject properly you place yourself at risk of bruising, ‘dirty hits’, blood poisoning and abscesses (collections of pus under the skin). The following are only some basic tips. You should speak to a health worker about the safest method.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before injecting.
- Make sure all your equipment (swabs, water, spoon, tourniquet, filter, fit, etc) is new and sterile. Don’t share any part of your equipment, even a tourniquet. Hep C can be transmitted by tiny, unseen amounts of blood on hand or equipment if it comes into contact with another person’s bloodstream (e.g. through contact with the injecting site). Take extra care with group mixes. Don’t double dip your syringe into the mix after it’s been used.
- Sterile water is better than boiled water, but boiled water is better than straight tap water.
- Use sterile alcohol swabs (Mediswabs) to clean the spoon and the injecting area (different swab for each). Allow the spoon or skin time to dry after wiping. Wipe the injection site only once and in one direction.
- Don’t use filters from tailor-made cigarettes to filter your drugs, as these contain glass fibres that can damage your heart if injected. When filtering always use a cotton wool ball. You can even use a tampon or cotton bud in an emergency.

Birth certificates
A birth certificate is really useful ID. Your case manager or case officer can assist you to get a form to apply for an ACT birth certificate. After you’re out, you can obtain one at any post office or at www.ors.act.gov.au. If you’re applying for your birth certificate after you leave prison you will need some form of ID to complete the application.

You need to send it to:
ACT Registrar-General’s Office, Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration
In Person: 255 Canberra Avenue, Fyshwick ACT 2609
By Post: GPO Box 158, Canberra City ACT 2601
Office Hours: Monday to Friday 9am – 4.30pm
Website: www.ors.act.gov.au
Phone: 02 6207 0460

Other Births, Deaths, and Marriages ID
If you were born in another state, you need to apply to the registry office in that state. Fees may differ.

If you weren’t born in Australia, you need to get your Certificate of Australian Citizenship or Residency from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) (see below).

If you have a child under 18 years of age, a copy of his or her birth certificate is worth 40 points of ID to Centrelink if you’re named as parent or guardian on that certificate. A copy can be obtained by writing to ACT Registrar-General’s Office, Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration, the same way you apply for your own birth certificate (see above) and for the same $36 fee.

A marriage certificate is worth 40 points to Centrelink and 25 points for most banks. It is also available from Births, Deaths and Marriages for $36.

Certificate of Australian Citizenship or Residency
If you’re an Australian citizen you can apply for a Certificate of Evidence of Australian Citizenship from DIAC. Call DIAC for a Citizen Pack. There’s a $55 fee and you need to send them certified copies of other ID and an endorsed photo.
If you weren’t born in Australia but you’re a permanent resident you can get a Certificate of Evidence of Resident Status (CERS) from DIAC. The fee for this is $100, and, again, you need to send them copies of other ID.

**Immigration**  
**Phone:** 131 880  

**Driver’s Licence**  
A current driver’s licence is worth 40 points for Centrelink.

You need to be aware that if you have any outstanding fines issued in the ACT you will not be able to renew or replace your ACT driver’s licence until those fines are paid.

If you have a current licence but have lost it you should attend any ACT Government Shopfront and show proof of identity, complete a Replacement/Cancellation form and pay the fee of $29.

If you have an expired licence and have left prison you can arrange a new one by going into an ACT Shopfront and paying the renewal fee. The renewal fee is dependent on when your next birthday is as your licence is renewable every five years. You will be required to complete the declaration on a licence renewal form and pass an eye test.

You will need to provide proof of where you live to renew your licence. You should call Canberra Connect on 13 22 81 to confirm that you can meet these requirements before you go in. This may save you getting frustrated when you try to renew/replace your licence.

If your licence has lapsed by more than five years, you’ll have to sit your driving test again and pay the fee of $78.40 for the test. The fees can be waived if you have a Pensioner Concession Card.

Talk to your case manager and to Education about getting a learner’s licence while you’re in AMC if you don’t have a licence.

- Remove your mouth from the mask to allow exhalation turning your head to the side to listen and feel for escape of air.

**Re-check for signs of life**  
If there are no signs of life begin chest compressions giving 30 compressions at the rate of approx 100 compressions per min (almost 2 compressions a second) followed by 2 breaths:

- Ensure the person is lying down with their face up on a firm, flat surface;
- Locate the centre of the chest;
- Use 2 hands, exerting pressure through the heel of the bottom hand, and depress one third of the depth of the chest (about 4-5 cm in adults).

This is just a quick guide to mouth-to-mouth.

Training will help you be better prepared. The Red Cross runs the Save-A-Mate (SAM) programme, a first aid course designed specifically for overdoses. The fee is usually $55 but might be cheaper if you explain your circumstances. Call the Red Cross on 6234 7600 for more information.

**Safer injecting sites**  
You must only inject into veins. Veins carry blood towards the heart, and arteries carry blood away from the heart. Hitting an artery is dangerous because drugs injected in an artery have to pass through the capillaries before they get to the brain. These tiny blood vessels can become blocked, causing severe bruising, gangrene and even loss of a limb.

You can’t tell veins and arteries apart by the colour of the blood – all blood is red. Larger arteries have a pulse. Never inject into a blood vessel that has a pulse.

**How to tell if you hit an artery:**

- The blood will force back the plunger.
- The blood may appear frothy when you draw back.
- The artery may bleed heavily when you take out the needle and/or cause a rapidly growing bruise under the skin.
- The artery may hurt if you try to inject.
How to give mouth-to-mouth
Stable Recovery Position (only if there are signs that the airway might be blocked):

- Place near arm across person’s chest.
- Place opposite arm at 90 degree angle to the body.
- Bring near knee up at right angles.
- Gently roll the person onto the side, lifting under the shoulder and under the thigh.
- If there are no signs that the airway might be blocked, leave the person on their back. Open the airway by tilting the person’s head backwards. Give jaw support by lifting the person’s jaw forwards with a chin lift.
- If there does not appear to be any obstruction, maintain an open airway and check their breathing.

If the victim is not breathing normally:

- Give 2 rescue breaths – take a breath and place your widely open mouth over the person’s slightly open mouth, sealing the nostrils with the your cheek or pinch the nostrils.
- Blow to inflate the person’s lungs; if the chest does not rise ensure correct head tilt, adequate air seal and ventilations.

Mouth to nose method may be used when the rescuer chooses or when the jaws are tightly clenched or for infants or small children:

- Close the person’s mouth with the hand supporting the jaw and push the lips together with the thumb; place your widely opened mouth over the nose and blow into the person’s nose to inflate the lungs.

Mouth to mask rescue breathing may be used to avoid mouth to mouth contact by the use of a resuscitation mask.

- Position yourself at the person’s head and use both hands to maintain an open airway and to hold the mask in place.
- Maintain backward head tilt and chin lift.
- Place the narrow end of the mask on the bridge of the nose and apply firmly to the face.
- Inflate the lungs by blowing through the mouthpiece of the mask to achieve chest movement.

Trade and study certificates
Educational certificates and trade certificates, including qualifications and statements of attainment you’ve gained in prison (issued by Auswide Projects), are worth 40 points for Centrelink. If you need copies of your certificates, talk to an AMC education officer.

Divorce papers
Divorce papers are worth 40 points for Centrelink. If the divorce was lodged with the Family Law Courts, contact the National Enquiry Centre on 1300 352 000 for a copy of the Document Request Form to obtain the papers. Fees will vary between $15 and $48.

Work references
A reference, termination notice or separation certificate from a former employer is worth 10 points for Centrelink. This includes any work you’ve done while in prison. Contact anyone you’ve worked for in the past. For work you’ve done in prison, speak to the Manager of Prisoner Employment Services for a work referral.

Tax file number
You need a tax file number to work or to claim Centrelink benefits (you’ll get 28 days to get one after you apply for payments). Apply for a tax file number (or enquire about an old one you’ve lost) by calling the Australian Taxation Office. You’ll need some ID to apply.

Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
Phone:
13 28 61
www.ato.gov.au

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders
If you’re Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander you may be able to get:

- help to get your birth certificate;
- a Medicare Card without other ID;
- a reference.
Medicare Cards for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders
If you don’t have other ID, get an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment form for Medicare signed by an elder or other prison worker who knows you. Send it to:
Liaison Indigenous Access
HIC Reply Paid 9822
Canberra City ACT 2600

or contact the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medicare Access line for more details: 1800 556 955.

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander reference
You may be able to get a reference from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation, giving your full details and the length of time they’ve known you. This can give you extra points with Centrelink and some banks.

Other ID
Other forms of useful ID.
• Student ID cards.
• Health care cards.
• Gas, phone or electricity bills showing your name and address.
• Other licences (e.g. forklift).
• Car registration papers.
• Tenancy agreements.
• School certificates or reports.

• Ambos won’t call the police to an overdose unless they’re threatened at the scene, or the OD is fatal. Don’t fail to call the ambos because you think they’ll bring the police.
• Narcan won’t protect you from a second overdose if you hit up again shortly after being revived. The Narcan wears off in half an hour to an hour, and you could drop again. Narcan won’t affect benzos or other drugs you’ve taken apart from heroin.
• Just because someone doesn’t drop immediately doesn’t mean they haven’t OD’d. Overdoses can occur quickly or slowly, and the person may go in and out of unconsciousness several times.
• People die from overdose because they stop breathing. The brain is starved of oxygen and eventually dies. Brain damage will occur within three to five minutes of a person ceasing to breathe, which is why you must call an ambulance immediately, and know how to give mouth-to-mouth.

Signs of overdose include:
• Not responding when talked to.
• Blue lips and fingernails.
• Convulsions.
• Cold, clammy skin.
• Snoring or gurgling sounds.

What to do if a friend overdoses
• Talk to them and try to get a response.
• If they don’t respond, call 000 immediately and ask for an ambulance. A person will die quickly once they stop breathing.
• Don’t waste time trying to bring them around yourself.
• Lie the person on their side and clear their mouth of spit, vomit or anything else. Tilt their head back slightly to clear their airway. Snoring noises indicate the person’s airway may still be partially blocked. Tilt the head further back.
• If the person is not breathing, give them ‘mouth-to-mouth.’
Avoiding HIV/AIDS, Hep B, Hep C and other blood-borne viruses
To prevent the spread of blood-borne viruses don’t re-use syringes and don’t share any drug using equipment. Needle and Syringe Programs (NSPs) are a public health measure which can provide new syringes and injecting equipment either free or at low cost. They can also provide information on injecting safely, education, and referral to other services such as drug treatment, medical care and legal and social services. NSPs also provide condoms and lube for safer sex.

There are two primary NSPs located at City Health Centre (outside ground floor entrance to the right of main door) corner Moore & Alinga Streets Canberra City, phone 6247 5230 and Phillip Health Centre corner of Keltie and Corinna Streets Woden, phone 6285 3223.

The Mobile NSP is a white Tarago van with a picture of DRIX on the side. It distributes information and free injecting equipment, which includes specialised equipment such as wheel filters and butterflies. The Mobile NSP is at the following locations:
- Gungahlin, Tuesdays 9:00am to 11:00am in the car park on the corner of Ernest Cavanagh and Gozzard Streets
- Tuggeranong, Wednesdays 9:00am to 11:00am in the car park on the corner of Anketell and Pitman Streets
- Fyshwick, Thursdays 4:00pm to 6:00pm in the car park on the corner of Wollongong and Maryborough Streets
- Dickson, Fridays 2:00pm to 3:30pm in the car park on the corner of Antill and Badham Streets.

Protect others in the community by disposing of fits in a special sharps container. You can also give your used injecting equipment to NSPs for safe disposal.

Some facts about overdose
- Narcan is the heroin-blocking drug that paramedics (‘ambos’) give to people who’ve overdosed. Only Narcan can revive someone who’s OD’d. Cold baths and showers, coffee, speed, ice, injections of lemon juice or water, walking around, and so on are all useless.

WHO TO CONTACT

ACT Registrar-General’s Office
Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration
In Person:
255 Canberra Avenue
Fyshwick ACT 2609

By Post: GPO Box 158 Canberra City ACT 2601

Office Hours:
Monday to Friday 9am – 4.30pm

Website: [www.ors.act.gov.au](http://www.ors.act.gov.au)

Road Transport Authority
In Person:
Dickson Motor Registry
13-15 Challis Street
Dickson ACT 2602

Office Hours:
Monday to Friday 8.15am – 5pm
or
Belconnen Shopfront
Swanson Plaza
Swanson Court
Belconnen ACT 2616

Office Hours:
Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm
or
Tuggeranong Shopfront
Homeworld Shopping Centre
17-21 Anketell Street
Tuggeranong ACT 2900

Office Hours:
Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm
or
Woden Shopfront
Ground Floor, Woden Library
Corner Furzer and Corinna Street
Woden ACT 2606

Office Hours:
Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm
By Post: PO Box 582 Dickson ACT 2602
Website: www.rego.act.gov.au

Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
Website: www.ago.gov.au
Phone: 13 28 61

Medicare (Health Insurance Commission)
By Post: Medicare GPO Box 9822 Canberra ACT 2600
Website: www.hic.gov.au
Phone: 13 20 11

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medicare Access (Health Insurance Commission)
By Post: HIC Reply Paid 9822 Canberra City ACT 2600
Website: www.hic.gov.au
Phone: 1800 556 955

Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)
In Person: 3 Lonsdale Street Braddon ACT 2612
By Post: GPO Box 717 Canberra ACT 2601
Office hours: 9:00am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday
Website: www.immi.gov.au and/or www.citizenship.gov.au
Phone: 13 18 80

To get phone numbers for other services call 1223. There may be a charge for this call if you’re not calling from a Telstra home phone.

1800 numbers are free from a fixed line. Some 1800 numbers can only be accessed from outside the metropolitan area or on a mobile phone. You’ll be charged for these calls if you use a mobile phone.

Check your local library for free internet access.

MORE INFORMATION
There’s no such thing as safe use of street drugs. However, there are ways to reduce the risk of harm that can go with drug use.

People who’ve recently left prison have a high risk of overdosing. (The risk of a fatal overdose is up to 14 times greater for men who’ve been in a correctional centre than for men in general, and as much as seventy times greater for women). If you’ve stopped using, or have been using a weaker strength drug, your body’s tolerance will have been reduced.

Avoiding an OD
To reduce the chance of an overdose:

- avoid combining drugs – mixing heroin or other opiates with other drugs increases the risk of overdose – drinking alcohol and benzodiazepines (such as Valium or Serapax) is also very risky;
- test with small amounts and go slow – wait at least five minutes (the longer the better) before another hit;
- think about tolerance – if you haven’t used for a while or are using less, you should try a small amount first.

Never use alone
Think what will happen if you drop (overdose). Having someone else there when you’re using could mean the difference between life and death.

Additional information for people with Hep C
If you have Hep C and/or some damage to your liver you may have a greater risk of overdose because your liver may break down drugs more slowly, and their effects may last longer. Combining drugs increases this risk.

Safer injecting is important for people who are Hep C positive because you can be reinfected with a different strain (genotype) or infect others with the Hep C virus. Tiny amounts of blood – even in microscopic amounts – can spread the disease, not only from syringes but also from tourniquets and fingers.
SAFER INJECTING

The ACT Department of Corrective Services does not condone the use of illegal drugs. It is safest not to use drugs at all. The information provided in this section is based on health promotion and harm reduction material from the ACT Department of Health, The Hep C Council and the AIDS Action Council.

QUICK GUIDE

Be aware that people who’ve recently left prison have a high risk of overdose.

Reduce the risk of overdose by:
• not mixing drugs;
• testing with smaller amounts and going slow;
• not using alone;
• learning mouth-to-mouth first aid.

Avoid viruses such as HIV, Hep B and Hep C by:
• using a clean fit every time;
• using Needle and Syringe Programs;
• not sharing any injecting equipment.

Keep reading for:
• more information about safer use
• what to do if someone overdoses
• useful contact numbers

PAROLE AND LEGAL ISSUES

QUICK GUIDE

What is parole?
• You need to apply for parole to the Sentence Administration Board.
• Parole is a part of a sentence that’s served in the community.
• Parole has conditions like reporting to a probation and parole officer, doing programs and drug testing.
• While on parole your probation and parole officer will give you support and link you with other services.

Who gets parole?
• A probation and parole officer will interview you and visit the place you plan to live when released.
• After interviewing you and visiting the place where you plan to live, the probation and parole officer will write a report to the Sentence Administration Board.
• The report will recommend for or against your parole.
• The Sentence Administration Board makes the final decision.

Parole and accommodation
• Make sure you get your probation and parole officer to explain all your parole conditions.
• The Sentence Administration Board must approve your accommodation before you can get parole.
• You need to check with your probation and parole officer before you move to a different location.
• It is likely that you will receive an unannounced home visit from your probation and parole officer.

Breaches
• If you don’t meet your parole obligations you will get reported to the Sentence Administration Board and may be sent back to prison.
• Not all breaches mean getting sent back to prison.
• If you do go back to prison, you can apply for parole again later.
Need legal advice?
Contact Legal Aid Commission (ACT) on 6243 3471 for appointments or 1300 654 314 for telephone advice.

Or

Contact a community legal centre, which are listed at www.nalcl.org.au.

Karralika
By Post: PO Box 2230 Tuggeranong ACT 2901
Website: www.adfact.org
Phone: 6292 2733

Marzenna drug and Alcohol Half Way House for Women
By Post: PO Box 106 Jamison Centre ACT 2614
Email: marzenna@toora.org.au
Phone: 6242 6530

Narcotics Anonymous
By Post: GPO Box 2091 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.naoz.org.au
Phone: 1300 652 820

Salvation Army Support Services
In Person: 1 Elder Street Braddon ACT 2612
By Post: GPO Box 435 Canberra ACT 2612
Website: www.canberracity.salvos.org.au
Phone: 6248 7191

SOS Addiction Recovery
In Person: Canberra Hospital Garran ACT 2606
Office hours: 6:30pm Friday
Website: www.sosaustralia.tripod.com
Phone: 0448 010 658

To get phone numbers for other services call 1223. There may be a charge for this call if you’re not calling from a Telstra home phone.

1800 numbers are free from a fixed line. Some 1800 numbers can only be accessed from outside the metropolitan area or on a mobile phone. You’ll be charged for these calls if you use a mobile phone.

Check your local library for free internet access.
alcohol to block bad feelings. Usually you’d see a counsellor about once a week.

Counselling can help you deal with the temptation to relapse into using again. Detox is only the start. The hard part is not using when things go wrong in your life, or when you’re in a situation of temptation (e.g. when you meet ‘old friends’ from the drug scene). A counsellor can help get you back on track.

Counsellors don’t tell you not to use drugs or judge you if you stuff up. Counsellors know that most people need more than one try at stopping, and will not reject you or criticise you if you have a few ups and downs along the way.

WHO TO CONTACT

**ACT Health – Alcohol and Drug Program**
**In Person:** ACT Health Building, Corner Alinga and Moore Streets Canberra City ACT 2601  
**By Post:** GPO Box 825 Canberra ACT 2601  
**Phone:** 6207 9977

**Alcoholics Anonymous Canberra/Queanbeyan**
**In Person:** Grant Cameron Community Centre, 27 Mulley Street Holder ACT 2611  
**By Post:** PO Box 3898 Weston Creek ACT 2611  
**Website:** [www.aacanberra.org](http://www.aacanberra.org)  
**Phone:** 6287 3020

**Arcadia House Withdrawal Centre**
**In Person:** Calvary Hospital Grounds, Mary Potter Circuit Bruce ACT 2617  
**By Post:** PO Box 538 Woden ACT 2606  
**Website:** [www.directionsact.com](http://www.directionsact.com)  
**Phone:** 6253 3055

MORE INFORMATION

**Getting parole**

**What is parole?**
Parole means you serve some of your sentence in custody and serve the rest of your sentence in the community.

You need to keep to the conditions that are set out in your parole order and have regular contact with a probation and parole officer.

Your probation and parole officer can give you practical help and support. This could include:
- support to help you adjust to living back in the community;
- referral to programs that can help you avoid going back to prison, such as relapse prevention or anger management;
- helping you get into CIT or other education programs;
- linking you with services that can help you find work.

Your probation and parole officer will monitor how you comply with your parole orders. This means:
- regularly reporting to your probation and parole officer or sometimes meeting at your home;
- it is likely that your probation and parole officer will visit your home unannounced;
- telling your probation and parole officer before you move to new accommodation;
- regular drug and or alcohol testing;
- participating in treatment or education programs.

Conditions are set by the Sentence Administration Board. They are different for each person, and can be changed by the Sentence Administration Board at any time.
Who gets parole?
When the court gives a prison sentence, it can state a ‘non-parole’ period. You will have to serve all of this period in prison.

Talk with your probation and parole officer early in your sentence so that you can plan for your release and increase your chances for parole when the time comes.

You must apply for parole to be considered by the Sentence Administration Board. If you don’t apply you won’t be considered.

A probation and parole officer will talk to you in prison, and write a report to help the Sentence Administration Board make its decision. The report will cover issues like your record, drug and alcohol issues, education and employment history. The Sentence Administration Board will also be interested in:

- your participation in prison programs that were about changing the behaviour that led to you being imprisoned;
- your overall behaviour in prison, e.g. any serious incidents;
- results of drug screening in prison.

You may have to attend a hearing with members of the Sentence Administration Board.

The Sentence Administration Board looks at each person’s case individually and can ask for extra information to help when making its decisions.

Parole and accommodation
To get parole you must have somewhere to live when you leave prison. Some options for accommodation include:

- staying with family, good friends or a partner;
- Housing ACT accommodation.

Your probation and parole officer is unlikely to support plans if they involve living with co-offenders or others with a history of offending or drug use.

You need to tell your probation and parole officer where you plan to live so that they can make a visit and confirm your address beforehand. It’s

Community Health Alcohol and Other Drugs service will be able to advise you about what rehabs are available in Canberra.

Withdrawal (detox) programs
You can usually get into detox more quickly than into a residential program, but the wait is still a week or more. There are different ways to detox, some easier and slower, some quicker but more difficult. Community Health Alcohol and Other Drugs can provide information on the different services, how much they cost, and so on.

NA and AA Meetings (Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous)
NA and AA meetings can help you cope with the temptation to drink or use, especially if you go regularly and find a good meeting. Some meetings may be more helpful than others, so don’t be put off if you don’t like your first meeting. NA and AA are based on the ‘12 step’ system, which requires you to admit you’re an alcoholic or drug addict and commit to abstinence. That means you aim not to use or drink at all. AA and NA don’t believe you can drink or use ‘a little bit’. You can still go to meetings if you ‘stuff up’, but not if you’re drug or alcohol affected at the time.

If you’d prefer to control your drinking or drug use rather than stopping altogether, or if you simply find the 12-step meetings unhelpful, consider SMART Recovery Groups or counselling as an alternative.

SMART Recovery Groups
SMART Recovery Groups provide a different type of self-help and support meetings for people with alcohol and drug problems. SMART Recovery Groups can help you to identify your triggers for alcohol and drug use, analyse the cost and benefits of use, and identify helpful strategies to prevent relapse. Ring 6257 2855 to find out more information, meeting times and location of SMART Recovery Groups in Canberra.

Drug and alcohol counselling
Drug and alcohol counselling involves sitting down with a counsellor and talking about your drug or alcohol issues. The counsellor may give you tips and strategies for dealing with the urge to drink or use, work on a ‘relapse prevention’ plan with you, and help you look at the way you use drugs or
Service streams

Stream I is for people who have not received ACT Community Health’s methadone treatment and/or those people requiring additional supervision. Methadone is prescribed by ACT Community Health’s Medical Officers and dispensed at ACT Community Health’s Alcohol and Drug Program. Dosing is conducted by Registered Pharmacists. Methadone is free for six months then all people pay $15 per week. A maximum of two take away doses are available for those meeting the necessary criteria. There is generally a waiting list to enter this stream.

Stream II clients are stabilised in Stream I or Stream III and then transfer to a General Practitioner for prescribing and a Specialised Pharmacy in the community for dispensing. The client pays $15 to the pharmacist per week with ADP paying the Pharmacy a $15 weekly subsidy. A maximum of three takeaway doses are available for clients who meet the necessary criteria.

Stream III is for new clients who are assessed as suitable by an ACT Community Health Medical Officer and who agree to pay $30 per week to the Specialised Pharmacist in the community. The Medical Officer remains the prescriber, providing short scripts and increased medical review appointments. Clients are dosed at a specialised pharmacy in the community. Clients can move to Stream II once stabilised on methadone treatment.

Who can use this service?
All residents of the ACT who think they, a family member or friend may have an opioid dependency and are suitable for methadone treatment.

How can I access it?
By contacting the 24 Hour Helpline (02) 6207 9977 for initial information and assessment.

Live-in rehab programs
Live-in rehab (residential rehabilitation) can be useful if you don’t think you’ll be able to cope with the temptation to have a ‘taste’ once you’re out. They provide a roof over your head as well as help with drug treatment. However, you need to be serious about staying clean, because most rehab programs will kick you out if you use. You may have to go to a detox program first.

What happens after I’m released on parole?
You will have an appointment with the probation and parole officer who’ll supervise you in the community. Usually you’ll have to report to your probation and parole officer at their office the day you’re released, or the next day. At this meeting you’ll go over your parole conditions.

You’ll be given details of this appointment before you are released.

As well as covering your reporting conditions, your probation and parole officer will talk to you about your needs, and work out a plan. Their aim is to help you address the reasons you went to prison, and to assist you to settle into the community and live a stable life. Your probation and parole officer will be able to help you do better if you can talk about what you need, and what you’re hoping to do.

Breaches
If you don’t comply with your parole conditions, your probation and parole officer will have to tell the Sentence Administration Board. The Sentence Administration Board will then decide what action will be taken. Action may include:
- noting the breach but taking no action;
- issuing you with a warning or changing the conditions of your parole;
- varying the conditions of your parole order;
- cancelling your parole order, which means you would be arrested and returned to prison.

Parolees who are returned to custody can get parole again later. The Sentence Administration Board will consider the possibility of you being re-paroled. In this application you’d normally give reasons why you think you’d do better this time around. Getting support from an agency listed in this booklet can help.
If, during your parole period, you are convicted of an offence that is punishable by a jail sentence (and even if you are not actually sent to jail), your Parole Order will be automatically cancelled and you will be returned to jail. This can be in relation to an offence you committed in the past and are now only facing Court for.

If you commit an offence during your parole period, which you are subsequently convicted of after your Parole Order has expired, you can also be returned to jail.

WHO TO CONTACT

Probation and Parole
In Person: Ground Floor, Eclipse House, 197 London Circuit Canberra City ACT 2600
By Post: ACT Corrective Services GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.jcs.act.gov.au
Phone: 6207 0888

Legal Aid Office ACT
In Person: 4 Mort Street Canberra ACT 2601
By Post: GPO Box 512 DX 5638 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.legalaidact.org.au
Phone: 6243 3471

Aboriginal Legal Service
In Person: Ground Floor Fujitsu House 7-9 Moore Street Canberra ACT 2601
By Post: PO Box 434 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: www.alsnswact.org.au
Phone: 6249 8488

MORE INFORMATION

If you want to avoid or control your alcohol or other drug use, you’ll need to put a realistic support plan in place now. The same temptations and opportunities to use are still out there, so if you want to stay clean, the following information may help. If you’re likely to inject drugs when you get out, the Safer Injecting section in this booklet provides important information on how to do so as safely as possible.

Methadone and buprenorphine programs
An appointment with a methadone/buprenorphine doctor should be arranged at least two weeks before your release. That way you stand a better chance of getting the doctor you want and the pharmacy or clinic of your choice. Corrections Health staff can organise this appointment for you. If you delay making these arrangements, you may have to wait a week or more after you get out before you can see someone. A lot can happen in a week.

Community Health - methadone services and alternative pharmacotherapies
Methadone services aim to minimise the harms related to opioid use.

Methadone belongs to a group of strong drugs called opioids or narcotic analgesics. Some are produced from the opium poppy (morphine, heroin). Others are manufactured from synthentic materials (palfium, methadone).

Methadone comes in the form of a syrup and is used to treat heroin-dependent people. In Australia, methadone is only legal within a treatment program.

People wanting to start on methadone treatment are assessed by an Alcohol and Drug Program (ADP) medical officer to determine if they are suitable for treatment. This involves taking a history and conducting a physical examination. If suitable, an induction process will be started, usually on the day of medical assessment. Clients continue to be reviewed by a medical officer while receiving methadone. The doctor enquires about drug use, health and other psychological and social factors. Prescriptions for methadone are reviewed every three months.
DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

QUICK GUIDE

If you want to stay clean consider:
- if you’re using methadone/buprenorphine, arrange an appointment with a treatment service before release so you can keep getting treatment. You need to do this at least two weeks before you’re released. Ask a nurse or AOD worker for help;
- getting a Medicare Card before you leave prison;
- referral to detox or rehab programs;
- going to NA (Narcotics Anonymous) or AA (Alcoholics Anonymous);
- attending a SMART Recovery Group;
- referral for drug or alcohol counselling.

Contact ACT Community Health’s Alcohol and Other Drugs services by calling the 24 Hour Helpline – 6207 9977 about detox, counselling, rehab and drug use, and for telephone support.

Keep reading for:
- information about staying clean
- phone numbers for some rehab and detox services
- phone numbers for self-help programs
- phone numbers for counselling services

GETTING A JOB

QUICK GUIDE

Although it can take time, many ex-prisoners get and keep good jobs.

When you apply for Newstart or Youth Allowance you’ll be sent for an interview about finding work.

If you’re ready for work you’ll be sent to a Job Network service.

You won’t get paid by Centrelink until you’ve had this interview, so it’s important to go.

When you go to the interview take your work history or references with you.

There are special programs to help Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and young people find work. Ask at Centrelink or Job Network about extra help you may be able to get.

For information about Job Network and other employment services contact 13 62 68.

For information about volunteering contact Volunteering ACT on 6251 4060.

Keep reading to find out about:
- How Job Network can help you
- Job Capacity Assessments
- Extra help to find work
- Work for the Dole and volunteer work
MORE INFORMATION

Finding Work

The AMC Employment Manager and Vocational Education and Training (VET) provider Auswide can help guide you in finding employment when you’re released from prison. Finding work is a numbers game and the more jobs you apply for, the more likely you are to find a job.

Try not to take rejections personally. With persistence and the right help many ex-prisoners do find and keep good jobs.

It can help if you:

• focus on applying for jobs where you have the necessary skills or experience;
• look at the things you can offer an employer. This can help you stay positive while you’re looking for work;
• spend some time each day on the phone, looking in the paper or on the internet, or accessing the jobs kiosk at Job Network or Centrelink;
• get up at the same time each morning, so you’re in a routine when you get a job and need to leave for work each day;
• make the most of services which are there to help you find work or access training.

Job Network

Job Network services help people find work. When you claim Newstart or Youth Allowance from Centrelink you’ll either be referred to Job Network or to a Job capacity Assessment. If you appear to be ready for work, and there are no barriers to you finding work, you’ll be referred to Job Network.

A range of non-government agencies are members of Job Network. If you have a preferred Job Network member you can ask Centrelink to refer you to them. Otherwise Centrelink will refer you to one in your local area.

It’s very important to attend your appointment with Job Network as you won’t be paid a Centrelink allowance until you do so.

12pm-3pm - Hot meals, Blue Door Drop-in Centre, Ainslie Village, Quick Street Campbell

Global Care Soup Kitchen - Capital City Outreach Centre, 17 Bowan Street Macquarie

5pm-6pm - Masonic Lodge Room 1, Griffin Centre, Genge Street Canberra City

Under 25 years free meals offered, Corner Pitman Street and Howell Street Tuggeranong between Bowling Alley & Southern Cross Club

To get phone numbers for other services call 1223. There may be a charge for this call if you’re not calling from a Telstra home phone.

1800 numbers are free from a fixed line. Some 1800 numbers can only be accessed from outside the metropolitan area or on a mobile phone. You’ll be charged for these calls if you use a mobile phone.

Check your local library for free internet access.
At your first Job Network appointment you’ll usually be given Job Search Support to find work, including registration on the website [www.jobsearch.gov.au](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au) with a summary of your skills and abilities. When you go for your first Job Network appointment take some identification, and any information relevant to your employment. You may have a summary of your work history (also called a resume) or references, or an application you’ve written for other jobs. If you don’t have a resume, ask Auswide to help you prepare one before being released from AMC.

You’ll be able to use Job Search facilities such as touch screen kiosks in Job Network and Centrelink offices where you can look for work. You’ll get a Job Network card with your Job Seeker ID to use when visiting the Job Search Support office. You can also get advice on job search techniques, career options and employment programs.

**Job Capacity Assessment**

If Centrelink can see you have medical issues, or other difficulties that mean you’re highly disadvantaged in the job market, you’ll be referred for a Job Capacity Assessment. This could be done by a specialist Centrelink officer, or by Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services (CRS) Australian, Health Services Australia or a non-government organisation.

Most Job Capacity Assessments take one to two hours. You’ll be interviewed by the assessor in an office. As well as deciding if you’re able to work, the assessment will work out whether you should be linked with employment or other services which could help you prepare for, find or keep a job.

If you face barriers to work such as homelessness, drug or alcohol problems or other personal problems, you may be referred to a Personal Support Program. If you have a disability you may be referred to a specialist disability service.
Job Network Intensive Support
You’ll be referred for Intensive Support if you can’t find a job in three months after you apply for Newstart. You can also be referred earlier if you’re identified through a Job Capacity Assessment as needing extra support. This could include training in interview skills or to boost confidence. If you can’t find work after 12 months you’ll get more intensive support again.

Extra help for Indigenous people
Job Search training is available as soon as you apply for Newstart or Youth Allowance. In some places where employment opportunities are limited, Community Development Employment Projects provide work experience that may lead to jobs.

Extra help for young people
Job Search training is available as soon as you apply for Newstart or Youth Allowance.

If you’re under 22 years you may be referred to a Job Placement Employment and Training (JPET) service. JPET can help you get back into education, get you help to find work, or sort out issues like being homeless that make it hard to find work.

Work for the Dole
Work for the Dole provides opportunities for voluntary work. You may volunteer for Work for the Dole if you have difficulty finding work. While you volunteer you can earn credits towards the cost of training programs. Talk to your Job Network provider or other employment service about Work for the Dole. If you’re unemployed for a long time (e.g. one year), you may be required to be involved in Work for the Dole for a period of time.

Do I have to tell my employer about my criminal record?
If, in the interview or after you get the job, your employer asks you if you have a record, it’s could be an offence to lie. If you get the job and your employer finds out about your criminal record, you could lose your job. Always tell the truth if you’re asked. However, if you’re not asked, you don’t have to tell your employer.
TUESDAY
7.30am-8.30am - Breakfast for those in need, St Peter’s church hall, Parkinson Street Weston

7.30am-8.30am - Breakfast for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Early Morning Centre, Canberra City Uniting Church, 69 Northbourne Ave

9am-2.30pm (12pm - Pie Day), Blue Door Drop-in Centre, Ainslie Village, Quick Street Campbell

1pm-6pm - (under 25 years). Cheese sandwiches, Youth in the City, corner Cooyong Street and Petrie Street Civic

4.30pm-5.30pm - Meeting Room 1, Griffin Centre, Australian Red Cross, Genge Street Civic

5pm - Dinner, (under 25 years). Belconnen Youth Centre, corner Chandler Street and Swanson Court Belconnen

7pm – (under 25 years). Free meals offered Tuggeranong Youth Centre, Corner Pitman Street and Howell Street Tuggeranong between Bowling Alley & Southern Cross Club

WEDNESDAY
7.30am-8.30am - Breakfast, Early Morning Centre Canberra City Uniting Church, 69 Northbourne Avenue

9am-2.30pm - Soup and sandwiches, Blue Door Drop-in Centre, Ainslie Village, Quick Street Campbell

9am-2.30pm - Lunch at 12pm, St Benedicts Community Day Centre, 1 Thorpe Street Queanbeyan

2pm-6.30pm - (under 25 years only). Cheese sandwiches Youth in the City, corner Cooyong Street and Petrie Street Civic

5pm-6pm - Food for Life - all ages Meeting Room 1, Griffin Centre, Genge Street Civic

Many employers will run a police check on everyone they consider for a job. This doesn’t mean that you won’t get the job if they find out about your record. However, you shouldn’t expect to get a job in an industry directly relating to your offence for example working directly with cash if you’ve been convicted of theft.

If you’re working or volunteering with children you will require a check of your police record in relation to relevant offences. If you’ve been convicted of certain offences involving children you may be breaking the law if you do voluntary or paid work.

Do I have to put my time in prison on my resume?
A resume is a way of advertising yourself to possible employers. It’s not a life history. Everything you put on your resume should be the truth, but you can leave things out that aren’t going to help your chances. If you have certificates from courses you’ve done in prison, you can put them on your resume without saying you studied in prison.

It’s not unusual for people to do short courses while unemployed. But again, remember that you must tell the truth if you’re asked.

Auswide runs courses at the AMC that can help you get ready for returning to work. For more information you should talk to a correctional education officer before you leave the AMC.

If you haven’t already completed a resume before your release, your Job Network provider or other employment service can help you write a resume, and work out how to deal with the gaps in your employment record.

Keeping your job
Finding a job is only the start of the challenge. The next part is keeping it. If you’ve spent months or years in prison, it can be difficult getting up every morning to go to work. Employers expect you to turn up to work every day, on time. It’s your responsibility, no matter how difficult at first, to get yourself up in time for work. It does get easier!
The difference between prison work and work on the outside may also cause problems. An employer in the ‘real world’ may have higher expectations than the prison did. You’ll be expected to work all day, only taking breaks at permitted times. An employer won’t ‘carry’ a lazy worker for long. Remember you’re being paid a lot more than you were in prison for these greater demands.

Ex-prisoners might also find it difficult taking orders from a boss. In prison, orders from officers are given every day. Remind yourself you’re not in prison, and that it’s normal for a worker to be told what to do by the boss. The better you become at your job, the less supervision you’ll need.

Fear and anxiety can be challenging when you start a new job. If you need help coping, ask for help. Use the list of counselling services provided in this booklet.

Bad workplaces
In some industries it’s not uncommon for ex-prisoners to be offered cash for casual work. Cash-in-hand work is not recorded on the books, and it’s illegal. However, it can be tempting to work for cash to supplement your Centrelink payment without declaring it. Be careful: if you’re caught, the penalty will be heavy, and you may end up in serious debt to Centrelink or even be charged.

Also, if you work for someone on this basis you’ll have no rights. It’s not uncommon for these employers to underpay or fail to pay their ‘unofficial’ employees for work done. They know you won’t complain to anyone because of your situation. If you get injured at work you won’t have the same protection. It can also make it harder later (e.g. for custody of kids) as you’ll have no record of having worked.

In some circumstances, it’s illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of their having a criminal record. If you feel you’re being treated unfairly or harassed on the basis of your criminal record (or for any other reason), the Human Rights Commission may be able to assist you.

You should also consider talking to or joining a union for advice and help with your employer. Jobwatch is also a useful contact for all legal matters related to employment.

WHO TO CONTACT

ACT Health Nutrition Services
In Person: Level 10, Building 1 The Canberra Hospital Yamba Drive Garran ACT 2605
By Post: PO Box 11 Woden ACT 2606
Website: www.health.act.gov.au
Phone: 6244 2211

Nutrition Australia
By Post: PO Box 5146 Garran ACT 2605
Website: www.nutritionaustralia.or
Phone: 0420 379 560

Free Meal Guide

MONDAY
7.30am–8.30am - Breakfast for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Early Morning Centre, Canberra City Uniting Church, 69 Northbourne Avunue
9am-2.30pm - Soup and sandwiches, Blue Door Drop-in Centre, Ainslie Village, Quick Street, Campbell
9am-2.30pm - Lunch at 12pm, St Benedicts Community Day Centre, 1 Thorpe Street Queanbeyan
12.30pm-4pm – Lunch, Northbourne Community Centre, double doors end of Block 5, Forbes Street Turner
4.30pm-5.30pm - Serving food for those in need, Australian Red Cross, Meeting Room 1, Griffin Centre, Genge Street Civic
7pm – (under 25 years). Free meals offered Tuggeranong Youth Centre, Corner Pitman Street and Howell Street Tuggeranong between Bowling Alley and Southern Cross Club
Chilli Con Carne
(Mexican beef with beans)
1. Add a 125g can of kidney beans to the sauce and heat.
2. Add ¼ teaspoon of chilli powder.
3. Serve with rice. 1/3 cup of uncooked rice will give you one serving of cooked rice.

Tacos
1. Add ¼ teaspoon of chilli powder to sauce.
2. Serve with taco shells, lettuce, tomato and cheese.
3. Save money by buying just the shells, not the kit.

Vegetarian Option
Replace mince in these recipes with a tin of kidney beans or lentils.

Volunteer work
Doing voluntary work may sound like a strange idea when what you most need is money, but there are some good reasons for considering it:
• Working voluntarily can prepare you for paid employment in a number of ways. You get used to dealing with straight people again and get some workplace experience.
• It gets you out of the house, which helps you feel less isolated and builds your confidence.
• It looks good on your resume, shows an employer you’re serious about working, and improves your chances of getting a job.
• It can sometimes lead to paid employment in unexpected ways, particularly if you do your job well.

For ideas about where to find voluntary work contact:
• Volunteering ACT on 6251 4060;
• the RSPCA, which has a large volunteer program. You need to attend information sessions first;
• the big charities, which always need help: try the Salvation Army (Salvos) and St Vincent de Paul (Vinnies), enquire at the local offices.

Childcare
If you’re caring for children, you can’t leave your kids at home by themselves while you go to work. Talk to Centrelink and your Job Network or other employment service about financial help available with childcare fees. Fees for childcare centres vary, so ask around. Family day care (care in registered carers’ homes) can be cheaper than childcare centres.
WHO TO CONTACT

CAREER INFORMATION CENTRE BRADDON
In Person: Level 1, 13 Lonsdale Street BRADDON ACT 2612
By Post: PO Box 5141 Braddon ACT 2612
By Phone: 13 28 50
General Hours:
Monday 8.30am – 4.30pm
Tuesday 8.30am – 4.30pm
Wednesday 8.30am – 4.30pm
Thursday 8.30am – 4.30pm
Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm
Saturday Closed
Sunday Closed
Note: The Career Information Centre is a career and course library, and NOT a centre which can process payments.

Local Centrelink Offices

WODEN
In Person: 90 Corinna Street WODEN ACT 2606
By Post: PO Box 274 Woden ACT 2606
By Phone: 13 28 50
General Hours:
Monday 8am – 5pm
Tuesday 8am – 5pm
Wednesday 8am – 5pm
Thursday 8am – 5pm
Friday 8am – 5pm
Saturday Closed
Sunday Closed

Spaghetti Sauce Plus
Makes two servings. This takes longer than the One Pot Spaghetti, but is very tasty and gives you some leftovers.

1 small onion
2 dessertspoons oil
250g beef mince
1 tin tomatoes
3 dessertspoons tomato paste
½ cup water
Salt and pepper

1. Chop onion into small pieces.
2. Heat oil in saucepan on high heat.
3. Fry onion until soft.
4. Add mince and cook until brown. Stir as you go to stop it sticking to the pan.
5. Add tomatoes. Break them up with a fork into smaller pieces.
6. Add water and tomato paste.
7. Sprinkle salt and pepper (if you want).
8. Let sauce boil, then turn heat down low.
9. Don’t put on a lid.
10. Cook for about 30 minutes, stirring regularly so it doesn’t stick to the pan.

As well as serving with pasta you can use Spaghetti Sauce Plus for:

Topping for Baked Potatoes
1. Bake potatoes with skin on in the oven at 180° for 60-90 minutes, depending on the size of the potatoes. Using a fork or knife, check they’re cooked.
2. You can also bake potatoes in the microwave. Prick with a fork so they don’t burst during cooking. Cook for 8-12 minutes, depending on their size and how many potatoes you’re cooking.
3. Cut potatoes open and serve with mince on top.
4. You can add grated cheese if you like.
Fried Rice
2 cups cooked rice (cook some extra the night before)
2 dessertspoons oil
2 rashers bacon or 2 slices ham
1 egg
1/2 cup frozen vegetable (e.g. peas and corn)
1-2 tablespoons soy sauce

1. Beat egg.
2. Heat 1 dessertspoon of oil in frying pan.
3. Pour egg into frying pan and cook like an omelette.
4. When bottom is cooked turn over and cook the other side.
5. Take out and cut into slices.
6. Cut bacon into small pieces.
7. Add 1 dessertspoon of oil to pan and cook bacon.
8. Add rice to pan and mix with bacon.
9. Add vegetables and cook until vegetables are heated through, stirring to stop fried rice from sticking to the pan.
10. Add soy sauce and mix through before serving.

One Pot Spaghetti
This is a quick version in one saucepan.
100g beef mince
1/2 small onion
1 dessertspoon oil
1/2 can tomatoes
1/2 cup water
3 dessertspoons tomato paste
1/2 cup uncooked pasta

1. Chop onion into small pieces.
2. Heat oil in saucepan on high heat.
3. Fry onion until soft.
4. Add mince and cook until brown.
5. Add tomatoes, tomato paste and water. Break up tomato pieces with a fork.
6. Bring to the boil and add pasta.
7. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes.
Recipes
If you haven’t cooked in a while, here are some easy recipes to get you started. Remember you might have some that don’t work the first time but keep trying, cooking can be fun.

COOKING TIP: Read through the whole recipe first and get all your ingredients out and do all the chopping and preparation. When it comes time to do the cooking you’ll have everything there and ready to go, hopefully this will mean nothing gets overcooked or burnt.

Noodle Omelette
1 packet two-minute noodles
1 small onion
2 dessertspoons oil
2 eggs
Salt and pepper
4 tablespoons frozen peas

1. Cook noodles for 2 minutes in boiling water. Don’t add the flavouring.
2. Chop onion into small pieces. Heat oil in frying pan and cook until soft.
3. Beat eggs with salt and pepper in a bowl.
4. Drain noodles and put in frying pan with onions.
5. Pour beaten eggs on top of noodles.
6. Add peas and stir everything gently to mix.
7. Cook on medium heat until brown on the bottom.
8. Cut into pieces and turn each piece over to lightly cook on bottom.

For something different:
- Add ½ cup grated cheese to the beaten eggs.
- Add ½ chopped tomato.

How to cook rice
1. Put 2/3 cup of rice in a saucepan.
2. Add 1 1/3 cups of cold water.
3. Bring to the boil.
4. Turn heat down very low, and cover saucepan with lid.
5. Check in 15 minutes. Rice is cooked when water has all been absorbed.
• Medium sized saucepan with lid (the lid is handy for straining pasta, etc).
• Kettle.
• Frying pan or wok.
• Mixing bowl (or use an ice cream container).
• Egg slice.
• Tea towel.

**Extra equipment**

You may add one or two of these things to your shopping list each week:

• Vegie peeler.
• Bread knife.
• Whisk or egg beater.
• Saucepan.
• Strainer/colander.
• Wooden spoon.
• Juicer.
• Tongs.
• Potato masher.
• Grater.
• Oven tray.

**EDUCATION**

**QUICK GUIDE**

• If you’ve done some study in prison (e.g. with Auswide or CIT) you can get recognition for what you’ve done, and keep working towards a qualification with CIT or another training provider.
• CIT staff such as the vocational counsellors, Outreach coordinators or Aboriginal coordinators can help you get recognition for your prison studies and help you choose a course and find out how to enrol.
• You can get income support from Centrelink while you study.
• Concessions apply to eligible Centrelink recipients in most circumstances. All applications for concession must be made at the Student Services Hub at the time of enrolment or prior to the fee due date. You need to take relevant evidence with you to support your claim for a concession.

Contact CIT on 6207 3100 for more information, or check their website at [www.cit.act.edu.au](http://www.cit.act.edu.au).

**Keep reading to find out about:**

• Studying at CIT
• Studying at a community college
• Centrelink support for study
• Contact details
MORE INFORMATION

Studying at CIT
Getting qualifications can make it easier to find work. If you’ve finished modules of study with Auswide or CIT while in prison, you’re already on the way. If you didn’t get the chance to study in prison, you may have the opportunities to get started now.

Before you’re released, if you’ve studied a course in prison with Auswide or CIT, talk to the teacher about what you could study next to build on your qualifications. Also ask where the course is taught, as this might make a difference to where you want to live when you leave prison.

It’s a good idea to take the results of any courses you’ve done when you go to discuss study options at CIT or other agencies. They may want to see your academic transcripts (lists of modules and marks).

Finding a CIT course
CIT campuses are organised in groups, called institutes. Not all courses or services are available at each campus. Contact details for the CIT are listed in the who to contact section.

Many courses will enrol students only once or twice a year. This means that you may have to wait before you can enrol, depending on your release date. Planning ahead will help you be prepared if you need to enrol fast, or if you have to wait a few months before you can start studying.

If you want to find out more about CIT courses, or already know the area or course you’d like to study, you can get information about CIT courses at www.cit.act.edu.au or by contacting CIT on 6207 3100.

If you’ve left prison and want help to decide whether you could study at CIT, and what you would study, try talking to a CIT counsellor. Almost all CIT campuses have a counsellor, and they’re trained to provide counselling to help people make work and study plans.

Losing weight
If you’ve put on weight in prison you may be keen to lose it once you get out. Here are some tips on losing weight:

- You may want to lose weight as soon as you get out but you need to be realistic. There will be so much that you need to deal with, it may not seem as important as you had thought. Make smaller goals and take it step-by-step, day-by-day.
- Talk to your doctor about losing weight. Your doctor will be able to explain that if you try to starve yourself and lose weight quickly, it will just come back later on. Keep away from fatty foods and walk every day and you’ll soon see the difference.
- When you first get out you might spend a lot of time on your own at home, and it’s easy to eat just to have something to do. Try to stick to meal times and do something to distract yourself when you think about eating. When a couple of people have noticed you’ve lost weight and give you a compliment, you’ll have more motivation to keep trying.

What you’ll need in the kitchen
You may need to get some basic equipment for your kitchen. See the list below for some ideas about what you’ll need.

New kitchen equipment isn’t cheap, and you may want to approach agencies like the Salvos or Vinnies for help with second-hand things, at least until you get settled. Or you could try $2 shops, which will usually be cheaper than the big chain stores for these items.

Once you’re settled you can replace things with better-quality items if you wish. Also think about the stove you’ll be using. If you don’t have a griller, a frying pan or wok will be useful for cooking meat.

Basic kitchen equipment
- Mug.
- Bowl.
- Small and large plate.
- Glass.
- Dessertspoon, teaspoon, knife, fork.
- Sharp vegetable knife.
- Chopping board.
MORE INFORMATION

Eating Well
When you leave prison you can choose what you eat, and when. This can be great, but it can also feel a bit overwhelming when you haven’t had choices for a long time.

Take-away food is quick and easy, but it costs a lot, and may not be the best for you.

Keep reading to find out how to get ready to cook at home on a budget.

Healthy eating
There are a lot of different ideas about healthy eating, and it’s easy to get confused.

Most food experts agree that it’s best to:
• eat a range of food;
• eat some fruit and vegetables each day;
• eat meat, fish or dairy in moderation;
• don’t eat too much deep fried or battered food;
• keep cakes and sugary things for treats, not every day.

Shopping on a budget
Here are some tips for shopping on a budget.
• Write a list before you go shopping and think about what meals you want to cook.
• This way you’ll know what you need and it’s easier to avoid buying things on impulse that you may not need or won’t use later.
• Go shopping on a planned day rather than when you are hungry, as this will reduce the amount of junk food you buy.
• When you do go shopping, choose just one treat at the end.
• Kook for the supermarket brands as they can be much cheaper and often are just as good
• Look through junk mail catalogues when they come in for the specials by shopping around you may be able to get some good buys.

CIT counsellors also help with personal or learning issues that could be barriers to studying successfully. You can find out about support services by contacting the CIT Counselling Services on 6207 3290.

Fees for CIT courses
Fees vary according to program and study load. Fees are also subject to change. Average general semester fees for full time study are:
• Certificate I-III $385 - $605 per semester.
• Certificate IV – Diploma $495 - $770 per semester.
• Advanced Diploma $550 - $990.
• Associate Degree – Degree fees upon application.
• Postgraduate fees upon application.

If you’re studying part time fees are lower and are a proportion of full time fees depending on the study load.

Can I get a concession?
A 50% fee concession is available to students who are in receipt of:
• Youth Allowance.
• Newstart Allowance.
• Abstudy/Austudy payment.
• Pensioner Concession.
• Parenting Payment.
• Partner Allowance.
• Department of Veterans’ Affairs Children’s Education Scheme Allowance.
• Veterans’ Affairs Services Pensioner Concession.

Fee Concessions only apply to course (program) fees and do not apply to:
• CITSA Services Fee.
• CITCard Replacement Fee.
• Higher Education Fees (Degrees and Associate Degrees).
• Apprenticeships/traineeship program fees.
• Programs conducted by CIT Solutions.
• Late fees, administration fees, material fees, resource fees and facilities fees.
• Sponsored student including those from Government agencies, public and private employers and funded employment agencies.

All applications for Concessions must be made at the time of enrolment or prior to the fee due date. You need to take relevant evidence with you to support your claim for a concession.

What other fees are there?
Some examples of additional fees are:
• materials fees covering some of the cost of materials and equipment;
• excursion fees covering the cost of some excursions;
• recognition fee is the fee for applying for Recognition by Assessment;
• CITCard replacement fee is payable if you loose you ID card;
• late fees may be applied for late payment of other fees.

Can I get financial support?
If you are experiencing financial hardship, CIT and CITSA offer a limited number of loans, grants and scholarships. You can obtain further advice by calling into a CITSA or Counselling Office on any campus or phoning the Student Services Hub on 6207 3188.

Indigenous scholarships are available. For further information please contact the Yurauna Centre on 6207 3545.

What about Austudy or Youth Allowance?
If you’re studying full-time (15 hours or more per week) at CIT you may be eligible for Youth Allowance (up to age 24) or Austudy or Abstudy. This means you won’t have the obligations to look for work that go with Newstart.

If you’re Aboriginal, or receiving a Disability Support Pension, you can get some extra help from Centrelink if you’re studying.

For further information on your eligibility, contact Centrelink or go to their website at: http://www.centrelink.gov.au

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EATING WELL

QUICK GUIDE

Buying and cooking your own food is the cheapest way to eat well.
Healthy eating means:
• eat a range of food;
• eat some fruit and vegetables each day;
• eat meat, fish or dairy in moderation;
• don’t eat too much deep fried or battered food;
• keep cakes and sugary things for treats, not every day.

Keep reading for tips on:
• shopping on a budget
• losing weight
• kitchen equipment
• easy recipes
AIDS Action Council of the ACT  
**In Person:** Westlund House 16 Gordon Street Acton ACT 2601  
**By Post:** GPO Box 229 Canberra ACT 2601  
**Website:** [www.aidsaction.org.au](http://www.aidsaction.org.au)  
**Phone:** 6257 2855

Women’s Information and Referral Centre  
**In Person:** Ground Floor London Court, 13 London Circuit (opposite the City Police Station) Canberra ACT 2601  
**By Post:** GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601  
**Office hours:** 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday  
**Website:** [www.wirc.act.gov.au](http://www.wirc.act.gov.au)  
**Phone:** 6205 1075 or 02 6205 1076

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### Help to succeed at CIT

CIT offers introductory learning courses, Adult Community Education (ACE) that can help you improve your reading, writing and number skills, improve your understanding in a particular area of interest and learn work skills. These can be stepping stones to other CIT courses, or to the workforce.

If you have difficulties with learning you may be able to get learner support to help you with your studies. Support is also available for students with disabilities. You might use a drop-in centre, see a tutor for additional teaching or get help on the internet.

If you’re worried that your reading, writing or number skills will let you down while doing your CIT course, talk to a CIT counsellor, your CIT teacher or an Aboriginal support service about getting help.

### Support for Aboriginal students

Indigenous education and student support services are available at CIT through Yurauna, the Wiradjuri word meaning to grow. Yurauna is an informal gathering place that provides opportunity for people to come together to find real solutions. Aboriginal staff are available to advise and assist regarding:

- Program and careers advice.
- Scholarships.
- Academic and tutorial support.
- Literacy and numeracy assessments.
- Enrolment procedures.
- Equity issues.
- Advocacy and mediation.
- Counselling personal issues – both at home and in relation to your studies.
- Budgeting.
- Study.
- Childcare.
- Time management.
- Referral to other support services within CIT and the ACT region.
- Accommodation.
- A student BBQ – provided by CIT student services.
- Outreach services.

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To get phone numbers for other services call 1223. There may be a charge for this call if you’re not calling from a Telstra home phone.

1800 numbers are free from a fixed line. Some 1800 numbers can only be accessed from outside the metropolitan area or on a mobile phone. You’ll be charged for these calls if you use a mobile phone.

Check your local library for free internet access.
• Cultural education.

This is a guide to some of the services provided by Yurauna. Potential students are encouraged to contact Yurauna to discuss their options on 6207 3309 or email yuraunaCentre@cit.act.edu.au

Should I tell CIT staff about being in prison?
You don’t have to tell anyone about being in prison unless you choose to or are asked. Sometimes CIT staff will be able to support you better if they do know that you’ve been in prison, but the decision to tell staff is up to you.

CIT counsellors provide a confidential service, so if you tell them that you’ve been in prison they can’t share this information with other CIT staff.

Certificates that you’ve gained in prison might show you’ve studied with Auswide. Most people in CIT who see your certificates will not be aware that you got them in prison.

Studying at university
Some jobs need university qualifications. Some universities have alternative entry options, especially for older students. These can include special study programs and special schemes for Aboriginal students. Fees for university are generally much higher than for CIT, and students often have to use government loan schemes to pay for them. Local libraries will generally have publications such as the UAC (Universities Admission Centre) Guide, Good Universities Guide or Job Guide with information about university courses. CIT qualifications at Cert IV level or higher can sometimes count towards the first stage of university degree. Contact the Universities Admission Centre on (02) 9752 0200 or www.uac.edu.au for more information.

WHO TO CONTACT

ACT Health (general enquires)
By Post: GPO Box 825 Canberra City ACT 2601
Website: www.health.act.gov.au
Phone: 13 22 81

The Canberra Hospital (TCH)
In Person: Yamba Drive Garran ACT 2605
By Post: PO Box 11 Woden ACT 2606
Website: www.canberrahospital.act.gov.au
Phone: 6244 2222

Calvary Hospital
In person: Mary Potter Circuit, Corner Belconnen Way and Haydon Drive Bruce ACT 2617
By Post: PO Box 254 Jamison ACT 2614
Website: www.calvary-act.com.au
Phone: 6201 6111

Canberra Sexual Health Centre
In Person: Building 5, The Canberra Hospital Garran ACT (entrance off Gilmore Crescent)
By Post: GPO Box 825 Canberra City ACT 2601
Website: www.health.act.gov.au/sexualhealth
Phone: 6244 2184

Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT)
In Person: Level 1, 28 University Avenue Canberra ACT 2601
Office hours: 9:00am to 4:30pm Monday to Thursday
Website: www.shfpact.org.au
Phone: 6247 3077

Canberra Hepatitis C Support Group
In Person: Level 2, Suite 8 18 Corinna Street Woden
By Post: PO Box 50 Woden ACT 2606
Website: www.hepatitisresourcecentre.com.au
Phone: 1300 301 383
you have a baby, gain or lose more than 5kg in weights, or it feels uncomfortable.

- An IUD (intrauterine device) is a small device inserted into the uterus and is recommended for women who’ve already had children.
- The pill (oral contraceptive) is taken by mouth once a day.

For information about contraception and reproductive health services contact the SHFPACT, Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT on 6247 3077. When you see any health service you have the right to ask to see a female health worker if preferred. You can phone the Women’s Information and Referral Centre on 6205 1075 or 6205 1076 to ask for information about women’s health services.

**Emergency contraception**

Emergency contraception is a special dose of the oral contraceptive pill that can be taken after unprotected sex to reduce the chance of pregnancy. It can be taken up to 72 hours (three days) after unprotected sex, but works best if taken as soon as possible. Visit your chemist, talk to a doctor or other health worker, or phone SHFPACT, Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT on 6247 3077 if you need to access emergency contraception.

Keep using your usual contraception in addition to emergency contraception to make sure you don’t become pregnant later in the month.

**WHO TO CONTACT**

**Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT)**
By Post: GPO Box 826 Canberra ACT 2601
Website: [www.cit.act.edu.au](http://www.cit.act.edu.au)
Phone: 6207 3100

**CIT Indigenous Educational and Student Support Services - Yurauna**
Email: yuraunacentre@cit.act.edu.au
Phone: 6207 3309

**Universities Admission Centre NSW & ACT**
In Person: Quad 2, Australia Centre, 8 Parkview Drive Homebush Bay NSW
By Post: UAC Locked Bag 112 Silverwater NSW 2128
Office hours: 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday
Website: [www.uac.edu.au](http://www.uac.edu.au)
Phone: 02 9752 0200

**Belconnen Public Library**
In Person: Chandler Street, Belconnen
Office hours: Mon, Wed, Thurs 10am – 5.30pm
Tue 8.30am – 7pm
Fri 8.30am – 5.30pm
Sat 9.30am – 4pm
Sun 10am – 5pm
Website: [www.library.act.gov.au](http://www.library.act.gov.au)
Phone: 6205 9000

**Civic Public Library**
In Person: Civic Square, London Circuit
Office hours: Mon 8.30am – 5.30pm
Tue, Wed, Thurs 10am – 5.30pm
Fri 11am – 7pm
Sat 9am – 4pm
Website: [www.library.act.gov.au](http://www.library.act.gov.au)
Phone: 6205 9000
HIV/AIDS

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. It’s passed on through sexual fluids and blood-to-blood contact. Unsafe sex and sharing of injecting equipment are the most common means of transmission.

Safer sex means correct use of condom and water-based lubricant during penetrative (anal or vaginal) sex, using condoms or dental dams during oral sex, and wearing latex gloves when penetration with the hands and fingers occurs.

You can be tested for HIV/AIDS at free and confidential specialised services. For more information contact the Canberra Sexual Health Centre on 6244 2184.

Pregnancy and HIV/AIDS

If you’re pregnant or wish to have baby, it’s important to know if you have HIV, because if you’re HIV positive, you may pass it on to your baby. If you’re HIV positive, getting the right medical care early in pregnancy can greatly reduce the chance of passing HIV on to your baby.

Talk to your partner, doctor or counsellor about what being infected with HIV means for you and your baby.

Contraception

Women who want to avoid getting pregnant after release can plan ahead to organise contraception. You can see Corrections Health before you leave prison, or a doctor or reproductive health service after you’ve left.

There are several options for contraception:

- Implanon is a small hormone rod the size of a matchstick that’s inserted under the skin on a woman’s upper arm and lasts for three years.
- Condoms are available for men and women and they provide protection from pregnancy and from sexually transmitted infections (only use a male or a female condom, not both at the same time);
- A diaphragm is a soft rubber cap which fits in the vagina and covers the cervix. Women should see their doctor or visit a reproductive health clinic for their first fitting. A replacement diaphragm may be necessary if
small risk if there could be blood-to-blood contact (i.e. menstrual blood). It’s important to use condoms or avoid sex at times when there could be blood present from either person. There’s a small chance (about 5%) that women may pass Hep C on to a child during pregnancy or birth. It’s unlikely that the virus can be passed on through breastfeeding unless nipples are cracked or bleeding, so breastfeeding is still encouraged for Hep C positive mothers.

If I do have Hep C, what can I do?
If you know you have Hep C there are things you can do to look after yourself. A well-balanced and healthy diet (low in animal fat) may help to relieve symptoms and reduce damage to the liver. Drinking less or giving up alcohol (and other drugs, including cigarettes) is recommended for someone with Hep C as these can be hard on your liver. Resting when tired helps combat fatigue. Mild exercise and maintaining a healthy weight is also important. Regular check-ups with your GP or health clinic are recommended.

There’s a 6-12 month course of treatment available for Hep C that can permanently cure between 50% and 80% of people. Free treatment can be accessed while in prison and there are many treatment clinics in the community. Outside prison, treatment only costs $10-$30 per month, because most of the cost is covered by the Government. For more information about treatment, speak with your GP or health clinic, or phone the Canberra Hepatitis C Support group on 1300 301 383.

If you’ve never had Hepatitis A or B, then a vaccination is recommended to prevent infection. There’s no vaccination for Hepatitis C. Even if you already have Hep C, stay clear of blood-to-blood contact to avoid getting another strain (genotype) of Hep C. Having two types of Hep C can make it more difficult to treat.

All sexual health centres offer free Hep C testing and pre-and-post test counselling. Most of them also offer free Hep A and B vaccinations for people with Hep C. For more information, and to find your nearest sexual health centre, phone SHFPACT, Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT on 6247 3077 or Canberra Hepatitis C Support group on 1300 301 383.
MONEY MATTERS

QUICK GUIDE

You can start to deal with debts while you’re in prison. Talk to your Case Manager or Case Officer if you’re concerned about debts.

Face up to debts as soon as you can. Most debts have to be paid eventually. You’ll probably pay less money in the long run if you work with your creditors, rather than avoiding them. Financial counsellors can help if you owe lots of money. They can often talk for you to people you owe money to.

Financial counsellors can help you sort out affordable payments, and set up a budget.

Contact Care Inc Financial Counselling Service on 6257 1788 for free financial counselling.

Keep reading for:
- tips on making your money stretch further
- places to get help with meals, food or other material aid
- information about dealing with debts
- phone numbers to get help with dealing with debts

It can take 10 to 15 years for symptoms to start developing and these will affect people in different ways. They can include pains in the liver area (the upper right side of your abdomen), tiredness, nausea, and flu-like symptoms. Some people may develop serious liver problems later in life. A healthy lifestyle, avoiding alcohol, eating a balanced diet and doing exercise can help you feel better and avoid long-term liver damage.

How to avoid Hep C
Hep C survives in blood for a long time, and can be passed on from very small amounts of blood, e.g. through a sore or injecting site. Avoid direct contact with blood, e.g. don’t share personal items such as toothbrushes and razors which may have blood on them. Other personal care items such as hair and nail clippers may also pose a risk if they haven’t been cleaned between uses.

Should I have a Hep C test?
It’s not possible to know if someone has Hep C by how a person looks or feels. To find out if you have Hep C all you need to do is have a simple blood test.

If you’re considering having a test, the Canberra Hepatitis C Support group (1300 301 383) can provide information and support to help you make this decision. Testing can be done before or after you leave prison. In the community you can get a test at any GP, sexual health centre or health clinic.

One in four people are able to naturally clear the virus from their body within the first 12 months of being infected, but they will still show that they have been exposed to the virus when they get the standard Hep C antibody test. To confirm if a person has cleared the virus or not, people can ask their doctor for a PCR test to check if they still have the active Hep C virus. If a person has cleared the virus they cannot pass it on to others. Even if a person has cleared the virus there’s no protection from getting reinfected with Hep C again in the future, so avoiding contact with other people’s blood is important.

Will my partner, family or friends catch it?
Hep C cannot be passed on to others through everyday social contact. Hep C cannot be passed on by hugging or sharing plates, cutlery, cups, toilets, baths etc. Although it’s extremely unlikely to be passed on through sex, there’s a
STI symptoms can vary
There are many different STIs and there are many signs that mean you may have caught one. Sometimes there are no signs at all. If you have symptoms of an STI, you’re likely to have a better outcome if you see a health professional early.

Common STI symptoms can include:
- unusual discharge from the penis or vagina;
- pain during sex or urination;
- sores, blisters, ulcers, warts or rashes in the genital area;
- itchiness or irritation in the genital area;
- persistent diarrhoea;
- fever, flu-like symptoms.

The vast majority of STIs are easy to test for and easy to treat. People who are sexually active should consider a sexual health check-up at least once a year at a GP, sexual health centre or health clinic.

Safer sex for women
It can be hard for women to raise the question of safe sex with a partner. Women may be concerned that their partner will be offended or annoyed if they ask them to wear a condom. Everyone has the right to protect their own safety in a sexual relationship, and asking a partner to wear a condom is the most effective way to do this. Call the Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT) on 6247 3077 for more information about safer sex.

Hepatitis
Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver and can be caused by a virus. The most common types of virus are Hepatitis A, B, and C. You can get vaccines to prevent Hepatitis A and B, but there’s no vaccine for Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C
A lot of people in prison have Hepatitis C (Hep C). Hep C is passed on through blood-to-blood contact. The most common way to get Hep C is through sharing needles (fits) and other injecting equipment such as swabs, spoons and filters. It can also be passed on through un-sterile tattooing and body piercing. It’s less common for Hep C to be sexually transmitted, but it can occur if there’s blood-to-blood contact.

MORE INFORMATION
Many people who come out of prison find they owe money for unpaid bills, old fines, etc. A lot of people put off dealing with debts, but this can make it worse in the end because many creditors will keep going until they get the debt paid. By then interest and penalties may have made the debt a lot bigger then it was in the beginning. You can start sorting out your debts before you’re released.

If you find yourself in a lot of debt when you get out, ring Care Inc Financial Counselling Service. They can help you sort out your money and provide a financial counsellor. Financial counsellors can talk with the people you owe money to, and work out arrangements you can afford. They can often get creditors to come to an agreement, even where you haven’t been able to get the creditors to listen. They can sometimes get the amount you owe reduced.

Centrelink
If you owe money to Centrelink, then talk to them about your options. Remember that Centrelink can’t refuse to pay you benefits just because you owe them money.

Child Support Agency (CSA)
Contact the Child Support Agency on 13 12 72 if you think you may owe money, or you’re concerned about your CSA obligations.

CIC (Criminal Injuries Compensation) Levy
Contact the court where you were sentenced to make arrangements if you have an order to pay a debt. You may be able to pay in instalments and, depending on your circumstances, payments may be able to be put on hold.

Unpaid traffic fines
If you owe money for unpaid fines, ring the Roads Traffic Authority (RTA) on 13 22 81. You can request an extension of time to pay by writing to the Parking Review Office. You will need to include the detail of your reason for requesting the extension and the period you are requesting. You can post your request to RTA PO Box 582 Dickson ACT 2602, fax to 6207 7120 or email rus@act.gov.au.
If you don’t make sure your outstanding fines are paid or make arrangements to pay then the RTA can commence action to suspend your driver’s licence, vehicle registration, or if you’re licensed interstate, your right to drive in the ACT.

**Court Fines**
If you have unpaid court fines/monies there is an option for you to serve/call-in part of the outstanding monies. You can’t serve all fines/monies. Talk to your probation and parole officer, case manager or case officer.

**Credit record**
To find out if you owe any money for unpaid bills, credit cards, etc, write to Veda Advantage to request a copy of your credit file. You can email the request to assist.au@Vedaadvantage.com or call its customer service centre on 1300 762 207.

**Start dealing with your debts before release**
You can start dealing with debts while you’re in prison. If you owe money to Centrelink, Roads Traffic Authority, Housing ACT or the Child Support Agency and you tell them you’re in prison they may suspend action until you leave prison. This may stop extra interest on the debt, and means family members won’t have to deal with debt collectors because of your debts. Or you can start paying your debts at very low rates.

If you have loan or credit card debts, you may be able to ask for repayments and interest charged to be stopped until you get out of prison. Ask your Case Manager if you need to contact creditors or get advice about dealing with debts while in prison.

**Making your money go further**
It’s tough surviving the first few weeks and months after release, when you may face many one-off costs such as paying bond, fees for getting ID, setting up accommodation and so on. It’s possible to survive this. Here are some tips to help you manage to do this.

- Genital warts.
- Gonorrhoea.
- Hepatitis.
- HIV.

HIV care is provided by specialist physicians with full access to anti-viral and other HIV treatments.

Counselling and information for sexual health issues including:
- Safer sex practices
- Relationship difficulties
- Difficulties with sexual functioning
- Homosexuality and bisexuality

**How much will it cost?**
The service is free and a Medicare Card is not required.

**Do I need a referral or an appointment?**
No, you don’t need a referral letter to be seen. Many doctors might refer you to the Centre for a second opinion or help in the management of certain conditions.

The Centre holds walk-in clinics but you should phone 6244 2184 to check when these clinics are being held. The Centre does have an answering machine that you can leave a confidential message on and they do check the machine regularly.

**Remember**
- The Canberra Sexual Health Centre is happy to provide information and advice about sexual matters; you can call and have a chat with one of the experienced staff.
- If you have had sex, you might have caught a sexually transmitted infection (STI).
- Many people who have an STI do not have obvious symptoms.
- Testing for an STI is free and simple – consider it now.
Sexual Health

Safer Sex
Outside prison you’ll have new opportunities for sexual relationships, either by returning to your partner or with someone new. Avoid the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and practise safer sex.

Safer sex means:
- correct use of a condom and water-based lubricant during penetrative (anal or vaginal) sex;
- using condoms or dental dams during oral sex;
- wearing latex gloves when penetration with the hands or fingers occurs.

If you have unprotected sex with a person with an STI, you’re at high risk of catching that STI. You can’t tell by looking at someone whether or not they have an STI.

Infections that can be sexually transmitted include herpes, gonorrhoea, syphilis, genital herpes, pubic lice (crabs), chlamydia, Hepatitis A and B, and HIV/AIDS.

Condoms help prevent infection
You can prevent most STIs by using condoms during vaginal or anal sex. Condoms will only protect against disease if they’re used every time you have sex. Condoms can also prevent pregnancy. If you only have one sexual partner and are considering not using condoms, then it’s advisable that you both have a sexual health check-up before stopping condom use.

Canberra Sexual Health Centre
The Canberra Sexual Health Centre provides free and confidential information, counselling and treatment.

The Centre is staffed by doctors and nurses trained in the area of Sexual Health. As a specialist clinic they offer you advice and access to the latest information and treatment in the field of sexual health.

The Centre can test and treat the following STIs:
- Chlamydia.
- Genital herpes.

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Make a budget or money plan
Sit down and work out everything you need to pay for and whether your benefit payment will cover it. The financial counsellor can help you with this to get you started. Work out a budget so you know what you can spend each week and try to put aside money for the power bills. Things will be pretty tight for a while and you may need some help with food vouchers at times but you will eventually end up coping better than ever if you can stick to your budget.

Look at your spending
If you can’t work out where your money is going write down everything you spend. You don’t have to carry a book around, save all the dockets whenever you buy anything. Then you can figure out how much you’re spending on food while you’re out and how much smokes cost. You can see easily that if you take some food from home to work and set limits for how much you smoke each day you can start to budget better.

If it’s too good to be true, it probably is
You may try and solve your money worries by gambling, but the only people getting rich are the people who own the club or casino. Stay away from places where you know there will be pokies. Try and go to a friend’s place and have a drink instead of the pub or club.

Use your Concession Card and Health Care Card
You can save money by using your Concession Card on public transport and your Health Care Card when you see the doctor or buy medication. You should keep these cards with you all the time.

You can get Concession and Health Care Cards from Centrelink if you get an income support payment or are on a low income. If you’re eligible for a pension card you may save extra money, e.g. on movie tickets.

Beware of fines
You can lose your licence or have your car rego suspended if you have outstanding parking, speeding or red light camera fines. Make sure you’re careful about avoiding tickets so this doesn’t become a problem.
Contact Care Inc Financial counselling Service on 6257 1788 if you need help sorting out unpaid fines.

Watch your phone bill
Getting a mobile phone is great but the bills can catch you out. You may not know how much you’re going to have to pay each month and end up with big bills. You can get a pre-paid mobile so you can keep track of the costs and you can get your home phone converted so it can only take incoming calls. That way you only pay for the calls you make on the mobile.

You might be able to get help from your counsellor or probation and parole officer by organising to make the odd call at their office. They might not always be able to help out but if they can they will.

If you can’t pay a bill, call the company and explain
You might have some big bills left over from before you went to prison and you may just want to ignore the envelopes when you see them because there’s no way you can pay what they’re asking for. But if you give them a call and work out smaller payments you’ll be less stressed and you won’t have that sick feeling every time you go to the letter box.

Contact Care Inc Financial Counselling Service on 6257 1788 for free financial counselling.

Avoid excess bank fees
Every time you use another bank’s ATM they can charge you a fee and sometimes even with your own bank you only get a certain number, maybe 10, free withdrawals a month. Try and find out how it works with your bank. Sometimes if you use your card at the supermarket to get cash out these are free so make sure you get your cash then.

Spend carefully
You’ll wish you didn’t have to be careful with money but you need to accept that you do. When you first get out you might need to buy things second hand or use lay-by when you can.

If you answer ‘yes’ to any of the following, it could be helpful to be assessed for acquired brain injury:
- Have you been unconscious for more than 24 hours?
- Have you been a heavy drinker over a long period of time?
- Have you suffered a stroke or tumour, or an illness affecting your brain, such as meningitis?
- Do you have difficulty remembering things or planning things you need to do?
- Have you lost oxygen during an accident, overdose, suicide attempt of assault to your head?

For more information talk to your doctor or contact the Brain Injury Association.

Mental health
If you have a mental illness or were a patient of a mental health service or doctor before coming to prison, you can give permission to Corrections Health to pass on your information to a service in the community so you can keep getting the medication or other treatment that you need.

If your doctor has prescribed you medication for a mental illness, it’s important that you keep taking it unless your doctor advises you to stop taking it or changes it for you. If you need help with your medication or mental health issues, contact a community health centre, local doctor or your nearest hospital.

If you were referred to a mental health service when you left prison, but you’ve moved or you’ve lost contact with the service, you can go to any community health service or health provider and give them permission to ring the prison to ask for your information so you can get the right medication.

Getting dental treatment
You’re eligible for free public dental services if you have a Medicare Card AND a Health Care Card or a Pensioner Concession Card or a Commonwealth Seniors Card. Emergencies get priority, so there may be a waiting list for treatment.
MORE INFORMATION

Medicare Card
To get free or low cost medical care, you need a Medicare Card. If you’re an Australian citizen, you may already have a Medicare number. Ring Medicare to find out on 13 20 11.

Health Care Card
A Health Care Card can save you money on prescriptions and some other services.

For information about Health Care Cards contact Centrelink on 13 28 50.

Clinic referrals
You can ask Corrections Health staff for referrals to help you look after your health needs. This is really important if you’re on methadone or other treatments or if you have conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, Hep C or HIV where you need prescriptions and ongoing medical care.

Disability
A disability is something that limits your ability to do everyday activities. For example, someone with a physical disability may need a walking stick to get around. Some disabilities are not so obvious, such as an intellectual disability or hearing loss.

If you have a disability you may be eligible for extra services, e.g. to help you manage at home, or find work. It can be helpful to tell service providers about your disability and how it affects you.

If you can’t find the services you need, or feel you’re being discriminated against because of your disability, there are advocacy services that may be able to help.

Acquired brain injury
An acquired brain injury can cause problems with memory loss, controlling emotions, organising life and so on. You may not know that you have an acquired brain injury. Finding out about an acquired brain injury may help you get better medical help and other services.

Material aid
Material aid means food or food vouchers, electricity vouchers, clothing or furniture. Cash assistance is rare.

Material aid agencies have limited resources and may not be able to help you. Try to be polite if you’re refused, because you may want to ask for help another time.

If they can’t help you, ask them if they can suggest anyone else you can contact.

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WHO TO CONTACT

CARE Inc Financial Counselling
In Person: Shop 16, 1st Floor, Waldorf Apartments 2 Akuna Street Canberra City
By Post: PO Box 763 Civic Square ACT 2608
Office hours: 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday
Website: www.carefcs.org
Phone: 6257 1788

Road Transport Authority
In Person: Dickson Motor Registry 13-15 Challis Street Dickson ACT 2602
By Post: PO Box 582 Dickson ACT 2602
Office hours: 8.15am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday
Website: www.rego.act.gov.au
Phone: 13 22 81

VEDA Advantage
By Post: PO Box 964 North Sydney NSW 2059
Website: www.mycreditfile.com.au
Phone: 1300 762 207

HEALTH

QUICK GUIDE

You need a Medicare Card to get free or low-cost health services. Ring 13 20 11 for more information.

If you’re on Centrelink payments, you’ll get cheaper prescription medicines and other services if you have a Health Care Card.

Before leaving prison you can see Corrections Health:
• for contraception;
• for referrals to services such as community mental health;
• for referrals for methadone/buprenorphine.

Once you leave prison:
• let services know if you have a disability and need additional help;
• talk to your doctor before stopping medication you’ve been given for mental health treatment, or any other health condition;
• ask your health provider to contact Corrections Health if information is needed about your past or current treatments;
• check if you can use public dental units.

Keep reading for:
• information about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and Hepatitis
• information about pregnancy and contraception
• information about acquired brain injury
• useful contact numbers for health care and dental services

To get phone numbers for other services call 1223. There may be a charge for this call if you’re not calling from a Telstra home phone.

1800 numbers are free from a fixed line. Some 1800 numbers can only be accessed from outside the metropolitan area or on a mobile phone. You’ll be charged for these calls if you use a mobile phone.

Check your local library for free internet access.