



Glossary of terms

January 2025

Each HMI Prisons report includes a glossary to explain some of the terms or abbreviations you may find within it.

This longer glossary provides an alphabetical guide to other terminology associated with prisons, children's establishments, immigration detention and court custody.

We review this glossary regularly, but please let us know if you find any entries that need updating.

Email us at: HMIPrisons.Enquiries@hmiprisons.gov.uk.

AA

Appropriate adult (independent individual who provides support to children and vulnerable adults in custody)

ACCT

Assessment, care in custody and teamwork – case management for prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm

ACDT

Assessment, care in detention and teamwork – case management for detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm in IRCs

ACR

Automatic conditional release – applies to prisoners serving over 12 months and less than four years

Adult at risk

A person aged 18 years or over, 'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation' (Department of Health, 2000)

Alcohol-related violence programme (ARV)

Programme to reduce alcohol-related violent offending

Allocation

The process of deciding which institution prisoners are sent to, or what activities they do

Application

Form that prisoners fill in to make requests

Asset/e-Asset

Youth Justice Board assessment documentation completed by youth offending teams.

Association

Time when prisoners are allowed to mix with each other outside their cells

Authority to detain notification (IS91)

A written form which allows someone to be kept in immigration detention under the powers of the Immigration Act 1971. It must be served on every detained person, including children, at the time of their initial detention

Automatic release date (ARD)

Many prisoners on standard determinate sentences are automatically released at the halfway point, but there are exceptions to this for some offence types and sentence lengths

AVID Detention

National network of visitor groups to people in immigration detention

Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID)

Charity providing free legal advice, information and representation to people held in detention across the UK

Band 3 prison officer

All prison officers start their career at Band 3

Band 4 prison officer

There are two types of Band 4 prison officer: Band 4 supervising officer and Band 4 prison officer specialist

Big Word

Translation and interpreting service

BOSS chair

Body orifice security scanner

Bradley Report (2009)

Review of people with mental health problems or learning disabilities in the criminal justice system

Buddies

A type of prisoner peer supporter

Building Better Relationships (BBR)

A programme addressing violence in (heterosexual) relationships

Building Skills for Recovery (BSR)

Course that aims to reduce offending behaviour and problematic substance misuse

Canteen

Shop where prisoners can buy goods

CARE (Choices, Actions, Relationships and Emotions)

Programme for female prisoners

Care Act 2014

Outlines obligations on local authorities, including the way they assess and define need, charge and pay for care, safeguarding, dealing with provider failure and transition of children to adult services

Care and separation unit (CSU)

Prisoners can be moved to care and separation units for their own safety if they are at risk of violence from other prisoners.

Care experienced

A person who has experience of being in local authority care, regardless of their placement length, type or age

Care leaver

A young person who has been in the care of, or has been given accommodation by, their local authority for a period of at least 13 weeks before the age of 16

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

Organisation that registers, inspects and takes action to improve the quality and safety of services for people in Wales

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

The independent regulator of health and social care in England

Category A

Prisoners on the highest category of security risk whose escape would be highly dangerous

Category B

Prisoners for whom the highest conditions of security are not necessary but for whom escape must be made very difficult

Category C

Prisoners who cannot be trusted in open conditions but who do not have the will or resources to make a determined escape attempt

Category D

Prisoners who can be reasonably trusted to serve their sentence in open conditions

Cell call bell

Button in cell to summon staff in an emergency

Cell sharing risk assessment (CSRA)

Used to identify prisoners at risk of seriously harming someone they share a cell with

Certified normal accommodation (CNA)

Baseline CNA is the sum total of all certified accommodation in an establishment except cells in segregation units, health care cells or rooms that are not routinely used to accommodate long stay patients. In-use CNA is baseline CNA less those places not available for immediate use, such as

damaged cells, cells affected by building works, and cells taken out of use due to staff shortages

CFO activity hub

Funded by HMPPS Creating Future Opportunities, the hub supports prisoners on licence to move into education, employment or training on release

Challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP)

Used by all adult prisons to manage those prisoners who are violent or pose a heightened risk of being violent. These prisoners are managed and supported on a plan with individualised targets and regular reviews. Not everyone who is violent is case managed on CSIP. Some prisons also use the CSIP framework to support victims of violence

Child criminal exploitation (CCE)

Where children and young people are targeted by criminals and gangs to get them to engage in criminal activity

Children with restricted status

Any child or young adult prisoner convicted or on remand whose escape would present a serious risk to the public, and who is required to be held in designated secure accommodation.

Children's Rights Service

Providing children and young people with an independent visitor and/or an advocate.

Choices and Changes

An HMPPS resource pack for key workers or prison offender managers to use in one-to-one sessions with young adults who have been identified as having low psychosocial maturity. The exercises in the pack aim to encourage engagement and help young adults to develop their maturity.

Clean, Rehabilitative, Enabling and Decent (CRED)

Prison-based skills programme run by Amey

Close supervision centre (CSC)

Small, specialist units located within six of the high security prisons, holding some of the most dangerous prisoners who have committed serious, often repeated, acts of violence against others while in prison

Commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS)

Part of the Ministry of Justice's probation system, and designed to provide flexible, responsive services to help break the cycle of reoffending

Community Accommodation Service, Tier 2 (CAS-2)

Previously known as Bail, Accommodation and Support Service (BASS) – a contracted service which provides short-term accommodation for those who have no suitable accommodation and may otherwise be held in custody

Community resolution

A type of out-of-court disposal used to deal with low-level offences or antisocial behaviour through an informal agreement between the parties involved. It is an alternative to cases being progressed through the traditional criminal justice process.

Compact-based drug testing (CBDT)

Where offenders sign a compact to remain drug free and testing is carried out to measure their compliance

Comparator

Used in HMI Prisons' surveys; the comparator figure is calculated by aggregating all survey responses and so is not an average across establishments

Confidential access complaint

Complaints about prison staff or which are particularly sensitive or personal

Confidential access phone calls

Telephone calls which exempt prisoners from being monitored

Constant supervision

Takes place when the risk of suicide is deemed high and so the prisoner/child is directly observed by a specific officer for 24 hours a day

Control and restraint (C&R)

Used by officers and staff to physically restrain prisoners

County lines

Gangs and organised crime networks exploiting children to sell drugs. Often these children are made to travel across counties, and they use dedicated mobile phone 'lines' to supply drugs

COVAID

Control of violence and anger in impulsive drinkers (offending behaviour programme)

Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC)

The independent body that investigates potential miscarriages of justice in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI)

Independent inspectorate with responsibility for inspecting all aspects of the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland apart from the judiciary

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Prosecutes criminal cases that have been investigated by the police and other investigative organisations in England and Wales

Custodial manager (CM)

The most senior uniformed officers in a prison. They manage prison activities, often across multiple departments. Responsibilities include managing people and resources

CYP

Children and young people

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service)

A DBS check is a record of a person's criminal convictions and cautions

DEPMU

Home Office Detainee Escorting and Population Management Unit

Detached duty

Short-term postings for prison staff

Detention and training order (DTO)

An offender is subject, for the term specified in the order, to a period of detention and training followed by a period of supervision

Detention custody officer (DCO)

Custody officers in immigration removal centres

Disclosure rights

Information about when and how to disclose convictions when applying for employment

Discrimination incident reporting form (DIRF)

A form that prisoners can use to report discrimination

Double handcuffing

When a detainee's wrists are handcuffed together and a further handcuff is applied to secure them to a member of staff

DSPD

Dangerous and severe personality disorder

Dublin Convention

A European Union law that determines which member state is responsible for considering an asylum claim and allows member states to transfer asylum seekers to the responsible state

Duty governor

Governor in charge of routine operation of the prison

Dynamic security

Where prison staff develop awareness of individual prisoner behaviour and risk, and use this understanding to help create a safe and secure prison

Early removal scheme

Allows foreign national prisoners to be removed up to 365 days earlier than they would otherwise be released into the UK

E-ASSET

Electronic case management system for children and young people in custody

EBM (Enhanced behaviour monitoring)

Scheme including additional psychological intervention to help prisoners in open conditions

ECHR

European Court of Human Rights

ECSL (End of custody supervised licence)

A scheme intended to tackle overcrowding, which entails prisoners being released up to 70 days early and having their supervised licence in the community extended. Restrictions apply for certain categories of offences. ECSL started in October 2023 and ended in September 2024 (see SDS40)

Education, health and care plan (EHCP)

Provision that is additional to that which can normally be provided within a mainstream setting to meet a child or young person's special educational needs. If a child or young person has an EHCP, this should continue while they are in custody

E-list

Escape list

Email a prisoner scheme

Allows families and friends of prisoners to send emails into the prison

Enforcement agent (bailiff)

Can visit homes to collect debts – such as Council Tax bills, parking fines, court fines and county court, high court or family court judgments

Estyn

Education and training inspectorate for Wales

ETE

Education, training and employment

Family days

Many prisons, in addition to normal visits, arrange 'family days' throughout the year. These are usually open to all prisoners who have small children, grandchildren, or other young relatives

Free-flow movement

Allows prisoners to move about the site unescorted

Gate

The official controlled entry point to a prison

General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC)

The regulator for pharmacies, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in Great Britain

Good order or discipline (GOOD)

A prisoner can be segregated for this reason if they behave in a way that prison staff think would put other people in danger or cause problems for the rest of the prison

GRT

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW)

The independent inspectorate and regulator of health care in Wales

Healthy Relationships Programme (HRP)

Prison-based programme for men to address domestic violence

Helen's Law

2019 law placing a legal duty on parole boards to consider the cruelty of killers who refuse to give the location of a victim's remains when assessing their release

Help With Prison Visits (HPV)

Provides a contribution towards prison visit costs for close relatives, partners or sole visitors

Hibiscus

British charity providing advocacy, support and specialist services to foreign national and black, minority, ethnic and refugee women in prison

His Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS)

Responsible for the administration of criminal, civil and family courts and tribunals in England and Wales

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

Independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire and rescue services

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS)

Provides independent scrutiny of both Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority

HMP

His Majesty's Prison

His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS)

Carries out sentences given by the courts, in custody and the community, and rehabilitates people in its care through education and employment. HMPPS is an executive agency, sponsored by the Ministry of Justice

HOMES

A restraint system used by escorting teams on in-country, overseas and charter operations

Home detention curfew (HDC)

Early release 'tagging' scheme

Home detention curfew eligibility date (HDCED)

HDC eligibility dates are based on set criteria. Eligible prisoners will not automatically be released on HDC on that date

Horizon

A medium-intensity programme for those convicted of sexual offences

IAG

Information, advice and guidance

Illicit items

Items (such as drugs) that are restricted or used illegally within prison

Immigration, compliance and enforcement (ICE)

The area of the Home Office responsible for preventing abuse of the immigration system, increasing compliance with immigration law and pursuing immigration offenders

Immigration removal centre (IRC)

Immigration detainees are held in IRCs while their immigration status is resolved

Incentives scheme

Provides privileges as a tool for incentivising prisoners to abide by the rules and engage in the regime and rehabilitation. Privileges can be taken away from those who behave poorly or refuse to engage

Incentivised substance-free living (ISFL)

Prison wings providing a dedicated, supportive environment for prisoners who want to live drug-free in prison

Independent custody visitor (ICV)

Trained volunteers who visit police stations unannounced to check on the treatment and welfare of people held in police custody

Independent Monitoring Board (IMB)

Volunteers operating in every prison in England and Wales, and every immigration detention facility across the UK. They report on whether detainees are being treated fairly and humanely and given the support they need to turn their lives around

Independent review of progress (IRP)

Provide an assessment of how far prisons have addressed the concerns raised in HMI Prisons' inspections. IRPs are carried out after an Urgent Notification has been issued, or after particularly troubling inspections

Indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP)

Given to offenders who posed a significant risk of serious harm to the public. Although the IPP sentence was abolished in 2012, thousands of people subject to such a sentence are still in prison

Indeterminate sentence prisoner (ISP)

Generic term referring to both life sentence prisoners and those serving indeterminate sentences for public protection

Individual learning plan (ILP)

Most prisoners get an Individual Learning Plan listing the courses and training they should do in prison

Induction

Given to all prisoners when they enter prison

Initial classification

The process of assigning a security category to prisoners on admission

Insiders

Prisoners who introduce new arrivals to prison life

Integrated drug treatment system (IDTS)

Aims to increase the volume and quality of substance misuse treatment available to prisoners

Integrated offender management (IOM)

A cross-agency response to crime and reoffending

Intelligence report (IR)

Information collected and analysed by the prison service to prevent and detect crime, preserve order and discipline, and support offender management

Interception of communications

HMPPS can, where necessary and proportionate, intercept and restrict prisoner communications

Inter-departmental risk management team (IDRMT)

Prisoners subject to MAPPA (see 'MAPPA'), and other prisoners considered to be high risk are assessed through IDRMT at meetings attended by key staff such as seconded probation staff, police intelligence officers, and nominated risk management staff

Kaizen

Accredited offender behaviour programme for adult men who are assessed as high or very high risk

Key worker scheme

Operates across the closed male estate and is one element of the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model. All prison officers have a caseload of around six prisoners. The aim is to enable staff to develop constructive, motivational relationships with prisoners, which can support and encourage them to work towards positive rehabilitative goals

Kinetic Youth

Registered charity that works with those in, or at risk of becoming involved in, the youth justice system

Koestler Trust

Awards scheme for art by offenders

Lammy Review (2017)

An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system

Language Line

Telephone interpreting service

LAPPP

Local area public protection panel (Northern Ireland)

Lay Observers

Independent volunteers who check that prisoners escorted by private escort companies in England and Wales are treated decently

LDD

Learning difficulties and/or disabilities

LGBT+

HMI Prisons uses this term in reports to include lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people as well as other categories people use to describe their gender identity or their own understanding of their sexuality

Liaison and diversion (L&D)

Identifies people who have mental health, learning disability, substance misuse or other vulnerabilities when they first come into contact with the criminal justice system as suspects, defendants or offenders

Licence expiry date (LED)

The period on licence is usually the remainder of a prisoner's sentence after they have been released from custody. Licence expiry date Date should be included on the notification the prison gives each prisoner when it works out their sentence

Listener

Prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners

Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB)

Organised around police force areas and are mostly chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner

LSAB

Local safeguarding adults board

LSCB

Local safeguarding children board

MALRAP

Multi-agency lifer risk assessment panel

Mandatory drug testing (MDT)

Enables prison officers to require a prisoner to supply a urine sample to determine if they have used drugs

MAPPA

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: the set of arrangements through which the police, probation and prison services work together with other agencies to manage the risks posed by violent, sexual and terrorism offenders living in the community, to protect the public

MARAC

Multi-agency risk assessment conference

MARAP

Multi-agency risk action plan

MARP

Multi-agency risk panel

MASH

Multi-agency safeguarding hub

Mental health in-reach team (MHIRT)

Offer a similar range of specialist care, treatment and support as provided by community-based mental health services

'Merton' compliant

The standard social services-conducted age assessment

Minimising and managing physical restraint (MMPR)

Guidance on managing young people in secure training centres and young offender institutions, with restraint only used as a last resort

MQPL

Measuring the quality of prison life survey

Nacro

Crime reduction charity

National referral mechanism (NRM)

A framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support

Nepacs

A north-east England charity which aims to support a positive future for individuals impacted by involvement in the criminal justice or care systems

Non-parole release date (NPD)

The date on which a prisoner serving four years and over who has not been granted parole must be released

Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO)

A voluntary agency and registered charity providing services and policy comment within the Criminal Justice System

OBP

Offending behaviour programmes

Offender assessment system (OASys)

Assessment system for both prisons and probation, providing a framework for assessing the likelihood of reoffending and the risk of harm to others

Offender management in custody (OMiC)

Entails prison officers undertaking key work sessions with prisoners and case management, which established the role of the prison offender manager (POM) from 1 October 2019. On 31 March 2021, a specific OMiC model for male open prisons, which does not include key work, was rolled out

Offender management unit (OMU)

The aim of offender management units in prisons is to try to rehabilitate people so they are less likely to offend in the future

Official prison video conferencing (OPVC)

Available in all prisons to enable remote court hearings, as well as official visits and meetings (including legal and probation visits). OPVC is not used for social visits

Ofsted

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Inspects services providing education and skills for learners of all ages

OPCAT

Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

OPD

Offender personality disorder

Operational capacity

The total number of prisoners that an establishment can hold without serious risk to good order, security and the proper running of the planned regime

Operational support grade (OSG)

Prison support role. Unlike prison officers, contact with prisoners tends to be limited

OSAG

HMPPS operational and system assurance group

Parole eligibility date (PED)

Eligibility dates for parole depend on what type of sentence prisoners have

PAVA

Pelargonic acid vanillylamide – incapacitant spray classified as a prohibited weapon by section 5(1) (b) of the Firearms Act 1988

PCC

Police and Crime Commissioner

PCoSO

Prisoner convicted of a sexual offence

PEI

Physical education instructor

Person escort record (PER)

Provides relevant details to escort suppliers and the receiving location

Personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP)

A plan for a person who may need assistance, for instance, a person with impaired mobility, to evacuate a building or reach a place of safety

PGA

Prison Governors' Association

Phoenix Futures

Substance misuse service provider

PIPE

Psychologically informed planned environment. PIPEs are specifically designed living areas where staff specially trained in psychological understanding aim to create a supportive environment that can facilitate the development of prisoners with challenging offender behaviour needs

P-Nomis

Prison national offender management information system – Prison Service IT system

POA

Prisons Officers' Association

POM

Prison offender manager

Pre-sentence report (PSR)

Gives a sentencing court information about a person who has committed an offence

Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)

Supports prisoners, people with convictions and their families across England & Wales

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO)

Independent organisation investigating deaths in custody, and complaints from people who are in custody or under community supervision

Prisoner custody officer (PCO)

Escort, supervise, and transport people from courts, police stations, hospitals or prisons

Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS)

Provides secure transport of prisoners to and from police stations, courts, prisons, secure training centres and secure children's homes

Privileged visiting order (PVO)

Can be given if a prison feels they are beneficial to a prisoner's welfare, or as part of the incentives scheme

Prosocial

Social behaviour that benefits others

Prosocial modelling

Provision of consistent positive reinforcement for the expression of pro-social attitudes, values and behaviour; and the consistent challenging of antisocial attitudes and behaviour

Protected characteristics

The grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010)

Protection of adults at risk

Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse and neglect (Care Act 2014)

PSI

Prison Service instruction

PSO

Prison Service order

Psychoactive substances

Naturally occurring, semi-synthetic or fully synthetic compounds. When taken they affect thought processes or individuals' emotional state. In prisons, these substances are commonly referred to as 'spice'

RAPt

Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners Trust – runs accredited drug and alcohol interventions

REAG

Prison Service race equality action group

RECONNECT

NHS England programme that seeks to maintain any health gains made in prison by supporting vulnerable people leaving prison to access or transition health or care needs to community-based services

Recovery champions

A type of prisoner mentor

Rehabilitative culture

Culture that motivates prisoners to progress

Release on temporary licence (ROTL)

Being able to leave the prison for a short time for specific activities

Resettlement day release (RDR)

Being released during the day, for example to take part in work or education, and returning to prison the same day

Resolve

Cognitive-behavioural intervention for violent offenders

Responsible adults

Independent people who check on the interests of a child being interviewed

Restorative justice

Programmes where offenders consider the consequences of their offending for all parties and can offer an apology or reparation

Roll check

Head count of all prisoners

ROR

Resettlement overnight release

Rule 35 of Detention Centre Rules

Requires notification to Home Office Immigration and Enforcement if a detainee's health is likely to be injuriously affected by detention, including if they may have been the victim of torture

Safety interventions meeting (SIM)

A multi-disciplinary safety risk management meeting, chaired by a senior manager

SDS40

A scheme intended to tackle overcrowding where prisoners serving a standard determinate sentence only spend 40% of their sentence in prison instead of 50% and their time on probation in the community is extended. Restrictions apply for certain categories of offences. SDS40 replaces ECSL and releases commenced in September 2024

Secure training centre (STC)

A place of detention for children aged 12 to 17

Secure social video calling

A system commissioned by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to enable calls with friends and family. The system requires users to download an app to their phone or computer. Before a call can be booked, users must upload valid ID

Segregation

When prisoners are kept apart from other prisoners, either because they have behaved in a way that would put other people in danger/cause problems for the rest of the prison, or if prison staff think they are in danger

Shannon Trust

Charity that supports people in prison to learn to read

SMARG

Segregation monitoring and review group

SMT

Senior management team

SO

Senior officer

Social care package

A level of personal care to address needs identified following a social needs assessment undertaken by the local authority (i.e. assistance with washing, bathing, toileting, activities of daily living etc, but not medical care)

SOTP

Sexual offender treatment programme

Special accommodation

Unfurnished accommodation – used to manage prisoners who cannot be located safely in normal accommodation

Special purpose licence ROTL

Special purpose licence allows prisoners to respond to exceptional, personal circumstances, for example, for medical treatment and other criminal justice needs. Release is usually for a few hours

Spice

A synthetic drug that mimics the effects of cannabis but is often much stronger, with no discernable odour

SPR

Sentence planning review

Storybook Dads (also, Mums)

Enables prisoners to record a story for their children

Storytime Dads

Enables detainees to record bedtime stories for their children

Short-term holding facility (STHF)

Holds people for a short time while immigration authorities decide what to do with them

Sycamore Tree

Victim awareness course

Synthetic cannabinoids

Drugs that mimic the effects of cannabis but are much stronger, with no discernable odour

TACT

Terrorism Act 2000

Tariff

The minimum time to serve, set by the court, before prisoners on IPPs can be considered for release

Temporary presumptive recategorisation scheme (TPRS)

A scheme intended to tackle overcrowding, which requires governors to fast-track prisoners to open establishments without the usual restrictions.

Restrictions apply for certain categories of offences. TPRS was introduced in March 2023

Therapeutic community

Provides group-based therapy within a social climate that promotes positive relationships, personal responsibility and social participation. It addresses a range of prisoner needs, including interpersonal relationships, emotional regulation, self-management and psychological well-being

Thinking Skills Programme (TSP)

Cognitive skills programme addressing offenders' thinking and behaviour

Time out of cell

In addition to formal 'purposeful activity', includes any time prisoners are out of their cells to associate or use communal facilities to take showers or make telephone calls

Turning Pages

A reading programme created by the Shannon Trust, written specifically for adults (unlike its predecessor Toe by Toe) and delivered by peer mentors

Twinning Project

A partnership between HMPPS and professional football clubs to twin every prison in England and Wales with a local professional football club, to engage prisoners in football-based programmes to improve their mental and physical health and well-being, and obtain a qualification to help improve their life chances and gain employment on release

UK Border Force (UKBF)

A law enforcement command within the Home Office. Carries out immigration and customs controls for people and goods entering the UK

Unannounced inspection

Prison inspection carried out without notice to the prison

Unfurnished cell

A cell that is totally unfurnished or does not contain basic items of furniture. Used for the temporary confinement of a violent or refractory prisoner to prevent them injuring themselves or others, damaging property or creating a disturbance

UNLOCK

National charity for people with convictions, helping them to overcome the long-term disadvantage of a criminal record to reach their potential by providing information, advice and advocacy

Urgent Notification (UN)

Allows His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons to directly alert the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice if he has an urgent and significant concern about the performance of a prison

Virtual campus

Internet access to community education, training and employment opportunities for prisoners

Virtual learning environment

Computer system to help prisoners access external course materials and search for jobs

Visiting order (VO)

Sent by prisoners to people they wish to visit them

ViSOR

Violent and sexual offenders register

Voluntary drug testing (VDT)

Prisoners are expected to take a VDT once a month as part of their good behaviour compact with the prison

Vulnerable prisoner unit (VPU)

A unit or a wing where some prisoners stay if the prison believes they are at risk from others

Youth Custody Service (YCS)

Responsible for the operational running of public sector sites across youth secure estate, for children and young people between 10-17 in England and Wales. Also responsible for commissioning services and contractual management of private sector sites, as well as placing children and young people remanded or sentenced to custody

Youth Justice Board (YJB)

Non-departmental public body responsible for overseeing the youth justice system in England and Wales

Young offender institution (YOI)

Secure accommodation that children may be placed in if they are in custody. Young offender institutions are for boys aged 15–17 and young adult men aged 18–21

Youth offending team (YOT)

Work with young people that get into trouble with the law, are arrested, or taken to court, to help them stay away from crime

Zahid Mubarek Trust

Independent national charity founded in 2009 by the family of 19-year-old Zahid Mubarek, who was murdered by his racist cellmate on the morning scheduled for his release from Feltham Young Offender Institution