

Emergency Early Release

Information
for Families
and Friends

We know you will have questions about the Emergency Early Release of some people in our care.

We have prepared some questions and answers, which we hope will address any concerns you may have.

What is happening?

MSPs in the Scottish Parliament have voted to approve a programme of Emergency Early Release. This is in response to the prison population reaching record levels.

This means that some eligible short-term prisoners will be released earlier than their original liberation date.

Who is eligible?

People serving less than four years who are within 180 days of their release date.

Who is not eligible?

- Remand prisoners
- Life sentence, order of lifelong restriction, and extended sentence prisoners
- Those awaiting deportation, or eligible for extradition
- Those subject to a supervised release order, or non-harassment order
- Registered sex offenders

And anyone with convictions for:

- Terrorism offences
- Domestic abuse offences, or offences with domestic abuse aggravations (where the conviction is not spent).

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Will everyone who is eligible be released?

No. Governors have the ability to 'veto' someone eligible for early release, if they are deemed a risk to themselves or others.

When will people be told?

All those being released early will receive confirmation of their new release date in writing.

Anyone not being released early, as a result of the Governor's veto, will be advised of this.

When will people be released?

The emergency early releases will begin on 11 November 2025.

The releases will continue on a rolling basis for six months, until April 2026.

Will there be pre-release support?

Yes, we will provide pre-release support for anyone affected by emergency early release.

We will work with key partners inside of prison and in the community, to ensure your loved one's housing, throughcare, welfare and medical needs are supported.

This support is voluntary - the person in custody must agree to it.