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CONVERSE

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HMP Liverpool Repay £10,000 In-Cell TV Charges to Prisoners!

A prison has been forced to repay almost £10,000 to inmates who were overcharged for watching their in-cell televisions, the Ministry of Justice has confirmed.

The weekly charge for a television at HMP Liverpool is £1 per cell, but prisoners in shared cells are able to split the cost.

Around 1,400 inmates at the prison will be repaid a total of £9,580 because they were charged the full rate when they were eligible for a discount.

Ministry of Justice officials said the error was isolated to the Merseyside jail. As featured in national newspapers, the blunder surfaced after inmate Darren Seago sent a letter to prison officials in October last year.

He wrote: "Please could you direct me to the Prison Service Order concerning the price a prison can charge for television rental."

"I am being charged £1 per week, which is the same price for everyone whether you are in a single, double or dormitory cell."

"Common sense and logic would dictate that the price be divided evenly."

"What would happen if one person in a double refused to pay for the TV?"

"Would the cell mate still have to pay the same as someone in a single cell? With four inmates in a dorm, all paying £1, the prison is in effect receiving more rental than they have television sets."

A Prison Service spokesman said: "An administrative error at HMP Liverpool resulted in a number of prisoners being overcharged for television rentals all of whom have been refunded."

"There is no indication this has happened in any other prison."

"Prisoners are charged £1 per week for in-cell television rental. This is paid for through prisoners' wages."

Matthew Elliott, chief executive of the TaxPayers' Alliance, said: "It is absurd that we give these criminals televisions for their cells in the first place."

"When you consider that this money they are claiming back was given to them by the prison authorities in the first place, it seems even more cheeky that they are trying to get it refunded."

"If anything this case should be an opportunity to review the whole policy of giving convicts these perks at all."

Peter Johnson Deputy Editor of ConVerse said:

"Every time Matthew Elliott, a non-elected, self-appointed half wit of the Taxpayers Alliance, opens his mouth his brain falls out."

"He ignores completely that thousands of those who watch in-cell television have not been convicted of a crime but are on remand and so are innocent until proven guilty - yet he chooses to describe remand inmates as 'criminals'."

"He also forgets that in-cell television is a privilege, paid for out of the pittance prisoners are paid for making vast profits for private companies who use prison labour as a way of cutting their bottom line costs and so increasing their profits."



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