

Audit of Community Justice Accommodation Services

Local Authority	Service Provider	What is the policy relating to the accommodation of offenders?	Are prisoners able to retain their tenancies?	What are your needs for providing accommodation for offenders?
Midlothian	Housing Manager for Local Authority	Appropriate accommodation is sourced dependent upon level of offence and support needs. Currently developing an accommodation strategy for sex offenders. MAPPA is used to risk assess and approve accommodation for high risk cases.	Dependent upon length of sentence. If tenancy is relinquished assistance is given to source accommodation on release.	Need for accommodation with support packages provided by agencies who have the appropriate skills to manage offenders.
Scottish Borders	Local Authority	<p>Offenders are able to apply for RSL accommodation in the same way as non-offenders. They will be prioritised for housing on basis of housing allocation policy or RSL policy. In relation to a RSO leaving prison the RSLs have developed a joint protocol in accordance with NASSO.</p> <p>Homeless offenders are given priority under homelessness legislation. They are placed in temporary homeless accommodation pending permanent accommodation. There are major difficulties when an offender is subject to an ASBO. Where ever possible we try to avoid the use of homeless accommodation for a RSO. However, they need their priority status assessed by the homelessness team and there are difficulties with this process if the offender is in prison. Also with choice based letting prisoners cannot bid for properties from prison. An additional factor is the furnishing of a tenancy in time for release. While some furniture may be available white goods are more problematic.</p>	<p>Need to develop procedures with RLS's to measure this. Anecdotally, offenders struggle to maintain a tenancy without some additional support. In addition, retaining a tenancy is dependent on receiving housing benefit. This is only paid for 13 weeks whilst in custody, so longer term prisoners are usually encouraged to give up their tenancies to avoid rent arrears. It does mean they have to start the process again on release but are likely to be dealt with more favourably if they have no arrears.</p>	<p>There is recognition of some difficulties and work is ongoing within the Homelessness Service and the RLSs. Generally speaking if an offender needs support they can access support either through Supporting People and housing agencies internal support networks or through Borders Supported Living Service (Penumbra) which provides some specialist support to offenders with new tenancies. This is not funded by CJSW but funded by Supporting People and other Penumbra funding streams. 2/3 - Currently there are no specialist resources within Scottish Borders and we would access the services in Edinburgh if required.</p>

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Scottish Borders	Local Authority / continued			<p>These are funded either through the CJSW budget or following request to Scottish Gov.</p> <p>Any such intensive package has up till now been secured in Edinburgh. There are current negotiations with Penumbra to try to set up a high risk package.</p> <p>This is the favoured model in Scottish Borders. For offenders to be successfully located and housed within their communities the ability to negotiate a flexible support package appropriate to the level of need and risk to be delivered by a local agency.</p>
	Waverley Housing	<p>Where possible, Section 5 route is avoided, however, where 'suitable' accommodation is not found prior to release dates, referral under Section 5 to either Borders Choice Homes or SBHA would be made by SBC to ensure priority for any future 'suitable' accommodation.</p> <p>With regard to Sex Offenders the relevant Housing Manager will attend MAPPA where risk will be discussed and decision made as to whether to pursue appropriate tenancy from RSL's</p>	This is very much dependent upon length of sentence and ability to pay. Option is also available to prisoner to sub-let their tenancy normally for a period 6-12 months. Where rent arrears are likely to occur, however, prisoners are encouraged to terminate and re-apply prior to release, with no 'baggage' from previous tenancy which might affect another allocation.	See Local Authority response above.

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West Lothian	Local Authority Housing Mangers	<p>Anyone who is 16 years and over is eligible for admission to West Lothian Council's housing list.</p> <p>If the applicant is homeless and submits an application and is accepted under legislation, this application will be dealt with in accordance with West Lothian Council's homeless policy and procedures. If homeless the offender will be dealt with under the homeless legislation, homeless offenders would be deemed as a priority need and once accepted under this legislation, they will be provided with accommodation.</p>	<p>Yes, though we would engage in dialogue with the tenant if they were sentenced for a significant period of time. We would never serve 'an abandonment' on anyone who is known to be in prison or in long term hospital care. We must have reasonable grounds to believe that the property is unoccupied and that the tenant does not intend to reoccupy the tenancy.</p> <p>There is legal case law to suggest that a prisoner still "occupies" their tenancy even when in prison – see <i>Beggs v Kilmarnock and Loudoun District Council</i> (1995 SCLR 435)</p>	<p>West Lothian does not have the same requirements for supported accommodation it had say 5 years ago. SACRO Supported accommodation and Allelon no longer provide Best Value for West Lothian so these recourses will no longer be supported through block purchase SLA's. Instead, West Lothian will be initiating its own supported Tenancy project in partnership with Housing colleagues.</p> <p>Only CRANE will meet needs occasionally in relation to the highest risk offenders posing perceived imminent harm. Again though it is hoped having our own project meeting specific needs for West Lothian residents will reduce need for this service.</p>
City of Edinburgh	Local Authority Housing Manager	<p>There are no housing specific policies around the housing of offenders within the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC). We have adopted a corporate council approach to the management of offenders, and work very closely with our colleagues in Criminal Justice Social Work, Children and Families, the Police and NHS Lothian when accommodating offenders.</p>	<p>For those on Housing Benefit (HB), tenancies may be retained as long as the prisoner continues to receive HB (i.e. up to 13 weeks).</p>	<p>City of Edinburgh Council requires more provision at risk Levels 2 & 3 to meet current demand from adult male offenders with a variety of support needs & to allow for follow on accommodation from the Level 1 Crane Service.</p>

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<p>City of Edinburgh</p>	<p>Local Authority Housing Manager / continued</p>	<p>The Housing Sex Offender Liaison Officer (SOLO) is the single point of contact for all housing enquiries in relation to both Registered Sex Offenders and Serious Violent Offenders. In addition to this, we have identified Link Officers as 'single points of contact' within each of the Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The Housing SOLO participates in Risk Management Case Conferences (RMCCs), with the Advice and Support Manager attending all Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Level 2 meetings, and the Service Support or Assessment, Homelessness and Support Manager attending the Multi Agency Public Protection Panel (level 3)..</p> <p>It should be noted that offenders are treated in exactly the same way as any other applicant when they apply for housing, and are not given any preferential treatment.</p> <p>CEC has put measures in place to start working with offenders pre-release. The Housing Options Team has prison outreach workers, who will visit the offender prior to release to advise about housing options, and to support as appropriate .</p> <p>In addition, offenders may be linked in to the Four Square Prison Service, who will also support offenders due for release. All accommodation of offenders must be done in accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.</p> <p>All allocations of housing are communicated to the Police and Criminal Justice Social Work.</p>	<p>Where it is known that the prisoner is going to be remanded for longer than 13 weeks, the tenancy will be terminated. The prisoner will receive support and advice about the status of their tenancy throughout this time (usually from the Four Square Prison Service).</p> <p>When a prisoner loses their accommodation while they serve a sentence, they will be fully supported around their housing and accommodation options in the lead up to their release date.</p>	<p>An estimated additional six places are required at present.</p> <p>There is a need to reconfigure the supported accommodation provision for a small number, possibly four placements a year, of young male high risk offenders subject to statutory supervision who require high supervision and monitoring and high levels of support.</p> <p>The very small number of female offenders subject to statutory supervision who require supported accommodation can usually be accommodated in Level 3 accommodation provided by SACRO with additional Support services if required. They are however in competition with male prisoners for these places. There also have to be resources available for additional support services where these are required.</p>

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<p>City of Edinburgh</p>	<p>Local Authority Housing Manager / continued</p>	<p>In addition to the housing options advice, offenders will be given a homeless assessment. This may result in their being given priority for housing, depending that they meet the criteria. if an offender does not have a local connection, they will not be given 'silver priority' for housing, i.e. they will only have waiting time points on their application, and the realistic chances of them being housed are vastly reduced. This is in line with current homelessness legislation, however, it should be noted that the criterion of 'local connection' will no longer apply from 2012.</p> <p>Where an offender does not have a local connection, they will be entitled to 28 days temporary accommodation, after which duty will be discharged and they will be referred back to their original local authority.</p> <p>If an offender is due for release, and the release date is known, an application for housing may be submitted two months prior to release. This should enable a housing options interview to take place, and if necessary, a homeless assessment. This should also allow for the offender to start making bids for housing through Choice Based Lettings.</p> <p>If an offender is homeless upon release from prison, he will be encouraged to present at Temporary Accommodation, where he will be entitled to up to 28 days' temporary accommodation. Housing officers will work with the offender throughout this time, looking at housing options and supporting the offender to bid.</p>		

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City of Edinburgh	Local Authority Housing Manager / continued	<p>Private Sector Leasing (PSL) may also be deemed as an appropriate housing option for the offender, however, this is subject to assessment, and the offender must meet the criteria for PSL before they will be encouraged to apply. This assessment is undertaken by the Housing SOLO.</p> <p>The housing of offenders coming through a homeless route must comply with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.</p>		
East Lothian	Local Authority/ Housing Manager	<p>The Policy is based on the general Council policy applies in respect of eligibility & vulnerability but includes assessment and management of risk.</p> <p>A Housing representative attends the Risk Management Assessment Conferences and MAPPA meetings which deal with housing of high risk & vulnerable offenders.</p>	Prisoners are able to retain their tenancies for short periods subject to Housing Benefit Regulations and Housing Legislation or in circumstances when they are able to sustain the requirements of their tenancy.	<p>East Lothian requires the full range of accommodation from intensive support through to RSLs. The low numbers of offenders mean 24 hour provision is likely to be provided by an agency or Council in Edinburgh.</p> <p>East Lothian would like to develop a local model of wrap around care through to visiting support either within the Council or through RSLs. A further option for future consideration is assuming a tenancy on behalf of an offender to allow that offender to remain in East Lothian.</p> <p>Suitable housing for sex offenders is an issue in East Lothian due to lack of suitable</p>

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East Lothian	Local Authority/ Housing Manager / continued			<p>housing and this is under constant review.</p> <p>Housing for women offenders can be problematic as many have young children that need to be housed with them.</p> <p>There is no separate policy for women offenders but East Lothian have identified this group as having different needs and risks to male offenders and therefore need different options of accommodation. One option for consideration is a 24 hour staffed hostel for women & children.</p>