

Factsheet 5

I am in prison and have nowhere to go when I am released

Applying directly to the Council with the help of your prison's Resettlement Service

You can contact your local Council up to 56 days before you know you are going to be homeless or threatened with homelessness when you are released from prison. You can do this by accessing the Council's website with the help of your Resettlement Service to complete an online self-assessment, which will give you some basic advice and information. Alternatively, your Resettlement Worker can complete a Duty to Refer via our email dutytorefer@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk.

Your case will be referred to FHDC's Housing Solutions Officer for Ex Offenders who will review your information and if necessary, will make contact to request you complete a more detailed Housing Options Assessment. Once this is received, they will arrange to carry out an interview either via telephone, usually in prison prior to your release.

During this interview the Officer will explain to you how they are assessing your situation and any support that FHDC can offer you.

You will be given advice and support about housing options and how to access them, including the private rented sector, you may also be able to access assistance with rent in advance and or a deposit guarantee payment, however it should be noted that financial assistance is at the discretion of the local authority.

Supported Accommodation Schemes

If you are going to be homeless upon release from prison you may want to consider accessing a supported housing scheme. These schemes can offer a lot of support and are a positive step to accessing and maintaining your own accommodation.

Supported housing is any housing scheme where housing, support and sometimes care services are provided as an integrated package. Some schemes are long-term, designed for people who need ongoing support to live independently, others are short-



term, designed to help people develop the emotional and practical skills needed to move into more mainstream housing. This can include support with health needs, including mental health, drug and alcohol use, managing benefits and debt, developing daily living skills and accessing education, training and employment.

There are several schemes in Kent run by charitable organisations including Pathways, Porchlight, Change Grow Live (CGL), Stonham, Sanctuary and many more. The Resettlement Service at your prison can help you apply. There are usually waiting lists for this type of accommodation so it is advisable to apply as early as possible.

Looking for affordable private rented accommodation

This is likely to be your fastest solution to securing somewhere to live in the local area. Finances are often the biggest barrier so make sure you have followed the advice above and if you are still struggling you might need to look in more affordable areas of the country.

Applying to the Council's Housing List



If you are not already registered on your local Council's Housing List you should apply as soon as possible. If your local Council is in Kent you can apply online through the Kent Homechoice website at www.kenthomechoice.org.uk. You have to have a local connection to the area you are applying to for social housing and you will be asked to provide evidence in connection with your application, which will include proof of identification and local connection to the area at the very least. If you are not on the housing list you cannot be considered for Council Housing or Housing Association properties.

For more information on applying on Kent Homechoice or looking for private rented accommodation see the factsheet 'Housing Advice in the Folkestone and Hythe District'