

FACTSHEET

Finding accommodation

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Charity Number 1093710



On release, one of your main concerns may be finding accommodation. In the London area especially any kind of accommodation can be very difficult to obtain. There is a shortage of housing in London which means that moving to your own self-contained accommodation on release from prison may be difficult. Prisoners Abroad will try to give you as much assistance as possible in finding a place to live. This is most likely to be some form of temporary accommodation.

1 Backpackers Hostels

As the name suggests, these are places that are used most often by young people who are travelling and want a cheap place to stay. The accommodation is usually dormitory style and can be booked one night at a time. Sometimes there will be a cheaper weekly rate. This sort of accommodation is only suitable as a very temporary option and people will often stay for a few nights when they first arrive.

2 Hostels

There are a variety of hostels in the UK ranging from those which provide accommodation for a few nights to ones which are more long term and could lead to permanent accommodation. Hostels are usually run by organisations such as the Salvation Army and some specialise in helping people who have health or addiction problems. Most often each resident will have their own room, but in some cases it will be a shared room or dormitory accommodation. Some hostels have kitchen facilities so that people can cook their own food but others will provide meals. Whilst you are receiving welfare benefits, your rent will be paid for you in these types of hostels. Most hostel spaces are obtained by referral from an agency working with homeless people.

3 Council

Some accommodation is available through the local councils. However each individual is assessed and accommodation is only offered to those considered vulnerable. You would fit this criteria if you had a serious medical problem or possibly a serious addiction problem. Any problem you have will need to be verified by a doctor.

It is important for you to try and bring back with you as much information about yourself as possible. This should include information about your housing prior to going to prison and any medical issues you feel may affect your housing.

4 Family and Friends

It is worth approaching family, friends or other contacts in the UK if you have them. They may be able to offer you some form of temporary accommodation even if it just for a few days.

5 Accommodation outside London

The organisation "Shelter" has a network of local housing aid centres around England that you can visit to get advice and information. To find out your nearest one phone 020 7505 2000.

It is also worth applying to the local council in your area, if you do not come under their criteria for help they may still be able to offer advice on what is available in the locality.

6 How Prisoners Abroad Resettlement Team can help

We can:

- Make referrals to hostels or other agencies that can assist in finding accommodation on your return.
- Complete support letters to local councils on your behalf. (We can only comment on your imprisonment and verifiable details about your health or other problems)
- Look for other agencies in your area that can advise about housing if you are returning to another part of the country.

Also, please refer to our General Resettlement leaflet, which includes a checklist to assist you in preparing for your release. This leaflet is available via the Prisoners Abroad website, or by contacting the office.

7 Useful Numbers

Shelter Line is a 24 hour help line 0808 800 4444. If you ring this number staff will be able to give you the number and address of hostels that have vacancies.

Please note Prisoners Abroad does not have its own housing or special referral rights to hostels or other types of accommodation.

If you require this leaflet in a large print format, please contact us. Our details are below.

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