



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

If you need housing advice or are homeless: Leaving Prison or Youth Detention

Homelessness and Housing Solutions Service

The Homelessness and Housing Solutions Service aim to prevent people becoming homeless by providing advice and assistance to help them find a solution to their housing problem.

If you are worried about becoming homeless you should contact us as soon as possible.

You can visit us at: Stockton Central Library & Customer Service Centre
Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1TX

Email us: Housing.options@stockton.gov.uk

Telephone: 01642 528389

Or write to us: Homelessness and Housing Solutions, 16 Church Road,
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1TX

Service opening times:

Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday: 9am to 4pm

Wednesday: 12.30pm to 4pm

Friday: 9am to 3.30pm

If you are homeless in an emergency outside these times you can telephone the **Emergency Duty Team**: 01642 524552, 5pm - 8.30am weekdays and all-day weekends (including bank holidays).

Making arrangements for your home while you are in custody

If you think you may be going into custody you need to consider arrangements for your home while you are in custody and for when you leave custody.

Housing benefit

You may be entitled to benefits to help pay your rent if you are in custody in England, Wales or Scotland. How long you may be able to get this for will depend on your circumstances:

On bail: if your bail conditions mean you must live away from your normal home until you have been to court, you may be eligible for benefit for up to 52 weeks;

On remand: if you are in prison waiting for your trial to start or sentence to happen you may be eligible for benefit for up to 52 weeks for your normal home; and

Sentenced: if you are sentenced you may be eligible for benefit for up to 13 weeks. You must be expecting to return home within 13 weeks of the date you first went into custody, including anytime on remand. You will not be eligible for benefit if you are not expecting to return to your normal home within 13 weeks of the date you went into custody.

Stockton Council's Revenues and Benefit Service will be able to provide you with some guidance.

PO Box 410, Stockton on Tees TS23 2YD

Tel: 01642 393829 E mail: benefits.section@stockton.gov.uk

Universal credit

If you were in receipt of Universal Credit to help towards your accommodation costs before you went into prison, you can continue to get the housing element for up to 6 months. This applies if you are on bail, on remand or sentenced. You will not receive any Universal Credit if you expect to be in prison for more than 6 months, this includes any time on remand.

You must let the local authority know as soon as possible following you going into prison, receiving a custodial sentence, or on release from prison.

Terminating your tenancy

If your sentence is more than 26 weeks (six months) in prison and you will have no income to pay your rent for the period you are not there, and there is no one else in your home that can pay the rent, you may have to give your tenancy up. If this is the case, then you usually need to give 4 weeks' notice to your landlord. Any benefit that you receive to help towards your housing costs will be paid during your notice period.

Through the Gate

Through the gate resettlement services were introduced in 2015 to bridge the gap between prison and community. Through the gate services help prisoners maintain or find accommodation; help with finance, benefits and debt; and to support them to enter education, training and employment. Additional support can be provided for those prisoners who had been sex workers or had experienced domestic abuse. The aim of Through the Gate was to provide a seamless transition between prison and the community.

For more information about Through the Gate, please [contact Thirteen](#).

Finding somewhere to live when you leave custody

Many prisons have a housing advice service available in them, run by an external organisation. If you won't have anywhere to live at the end of the sentence, then arrange to meet with them to discuss your housing options prior to your release.

If you apply to the local authority for housing advice, there may not be a legal obligation to provide you with interim accommodation. The Homelessness and Housing Solutions Team will discuss your housing options with you at an interview and work with you to develop a Personal Housing Plan.

If it is not possible to prevent you from being homeless or relieve your homelessness within the specified timescales, then the local authority will take an application from you under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

The outcome of this application will determine if the local authority has a duty to help you with a permanent home or not.

Family and friends

It may not be possible to have your own home to go to, following your prison release. One option to think about is staying with family or friends. This may be for a set period that will allow you to look at other housing options, knowing you have a roof over your head.

Supported housing

You may feel that you would benefit from some specialist support within a housing scheme. This could be to help you work through and overcome any issues that led to you being in prison or to develop skills to help you find and keep a home. You can discuss this with the Homelessness and Housing Solutions Team.

Social housing

Compass is a partnership approach for allocating available council and housing association properties for rent, exchange and shared ownership across the Tees Valley.

Properties that are available to rent will be advertised on the scheme daily. An application to the housing register will need to be made to access the scheme, following your application being accepted you must then tell Compass which properties you are interested in, this process is known as bidding. You can only bid for a property if you have an active housing register application. The [Compass website](#) offers useful information to help you find you a suitable home. You can use this website to:

- Apply to our Housing Register
- Search and bid for available properties
- View results of previous lettings

The following Social Housing Providers are operating in our local area, you may wish to contact to make enquiries regarding the types of accommodation they each have.

Accommodation Provider

Website for further information:

Accent Group

www.accentgroup.org

Anchor Trust

www.anchor.org.uk

North Star Housing Group Ltd

www.northstarhg.co.uk

Habinteg Housing Association

www.habinteg.org.uk

Hanover Housing	www.hanover.org.uk
Home Group	www.homegroup.org.uk
Housing and Care 21	www.housingandcare21.co.uk
Places for People	www.placesforpeople.co.uk
Railway Housing Association	www.railwayha.co.uk
Riverside (English Churches Housing Group)	www.riverside.org.uk
Thirteen Group	www.thirteengroup.co.uk
Beyond Housing	www.beyondhousing.co.uk
Livin Housing Limited	www.livin.co.uk
Hellens residential	www.hellensresidential.co.uk

Private rented housing

The Homelessness and Housing Solutions Team will be able to advise you on what housing is available locally within this sector. Or you could check out letting agent websites, local papers and shop windows.

Further information on housing options is available in our [Information and Advice pack \(link required\)](#)

Specified Public Bodies; Duty to Refer

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced a new Duty to Refer (DtR) requiring specified public authorities in England to notify Local Housing Authorities (LHA's) of service users they think may be homeless or threatened with becoming homeless within 56 days. This duty came into effect on **1 October 2018**.

Which public authorities have the Duty to Refer? The following services are required to refer service users they consider may be homeless or at risk:

- Prisons (public and private)
- Youth offender institutions

- Secure training centres
- Secure colleges
- Youth offending teams
- Probation services (including CRC)
- Jobcentre Plus
- Accident and emergency services provided in a hospital
- Urgent treatment centres
- Hospitals in their capacity of providing in-patient treatment
- Social service authorities
- The Regular Forces (under duties to The Secretary of State for Defence under the legislation).

For more information please visit our [Duty to Refer](#) page.