



# Homeless when released from prison

“Allerdale – a great place to live, work and visit”

## **Homeless when released from prison**

If you were recently released from prison, DISC Cumbria Offender Services offer advice and assistance with accommodation, finance, benefits and debt to anyone who is under the supervision of Cumbria and Lancashire Community Rehabilitation Company or the National Probation Service. Please speak to your Responsible Officer or Offender Manager if you would like to be referred to this service, as they do not accept self-referrals.

You could also apply to Allerdale Borough Council, who will carry out the homeless and housing advice for housing assistance as a homeless person.

## **Help from Allerdale Borough Council if you are single and homeless**

If you apply to Allerdale Borough Council for housing assistance because you are homeless, we might not necessarily be legally obliged to provide you with accommodation. Our duty from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 is to prevent or relieve homelessness if threatened within 56 days. In some circumstances, the council might decide you are more vulnerable because you have spent long periods of time in prison or on remand.

The fact that you have been in prison does not in itself mean that we have to treat you as being vulnerable and in priority need for accommodation.

The Council's Housing Options Service may decide that you are intentionally homeless if you were evicted from your previous home because of criminal or antisocial behaviour or because of rent arrears resulting from your time in prison.

If the Council decides you are intentionally homeless, it will only offer you limited help with finding housing. If you are in priority need, you may be offered temporary accommodation for a short period of time so as to assist you to find your own accommodation in the private sector.

Allerdale Borough Council may take the view that you should have known that your criminal activity could have resulted in you being sent to prison, and that this could lead to the loss of your home.

There may be restrictions placed on where you can live. For example, if an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) or bail conditions mean you can't go to a particular area, you may need to seek help from a different council.

Use Shelter's directory or call Shelter's free housing advice helpline on 0808 800 4444 to find services near you. The Shelter directory can be located at [shelter.org.uk](http://shelter.org.uk).

### **Help finding housing in the private rented sector**

You could try to find housing in the private rented sector. Allerdale Borough Council's Housing Options Service will be able to advise you how to find out what housing is available locally and how to apply for Universal Credit to help you with your housing costs.

You might be able to get help with a deposit through the council's private rented sector rent / deposit or bond scheme

### **Apply for a housing association home**

As a longer term alternative option, you could also consider applying for a Housing Association home. Please complete the on line housing application at [www.cumbriachoice.org.uk](http://www.cumbriachoice.org.uk) and contact Westfield Housing Association for an application form on 01900 602906 or visit [www.westfieldha.org.uk](http://www.westfieldha.org.uk).

### **Help finding housing from probation services**

Offenders serving sentences of 12 months or more are released on licence and live in the community supervised by the probation service until the end of their sentence.

If you are released on licence, your probation officer can help you find accommodation, as long as you have spent a continuous period of at least twelve months in custody.

### **Help with money before you are released from prison**

All prisoners are given a discharge grant paid for by the prison when they leave. This is money to help with your costs until your benefits are sorted out.

If a prison housing adviser has found you accommodation for your first night, you may be given a higher discharge grant (about an extra £50), which is paid directly to the accommodation provider.

Once you are re-housed you may also be able to get help from the Cumbria County Council's Ways to Welfare. Contact them on 01228 221100 for further information.



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