



Support for private landlords who rent properties to people leaving prison or serving a community sentence



When someone is released from prison, they need stability and security to get their lives back on track. Too often people are released without a safe and secure place to call home.

Many people leaving prison are seeking a **fresh start**. Having a home is the first step on that journey and can significantly help to reduce the chances of a person re-offending.

Landlords can help by providing people leaving prison with a chance to get their lives back on track. There is support available to help landlords do this.



What Help & Support is Available for Landlords?

If a person is newly released from prison or serving a community sentence, they will have a probation practitioner assigned to support them. They will be required to have regular contact with this person to comply with the conditions of their sentence.

The Probation Service work closely with a wide range of partners including, the Police, Youth Offending Services, Jobcentre Plus, local education authorities, local housing authorities, registered social landlords, social services, health boards, NHS trusts, providers of substance misuse services and providers of electronic monitoring services.

Helping a person on probation to find and maintain stable and secure accommodation is an important part of the probation practitioner's role. In doing this they will also be there to help the landlord to address any concerns they may have.

Probation practitioners work closely with Local Authorities, Housing Associations, and third sector providers to help ensure that people on probation can maintain their tenancies.

Probation practitioners also support people on probation to access Education, Training & Employment, address physical and mental health problems (including substance misuse if relevant), help manage their money, to link them back to their families and improve behaviour, motivation, thinking skills and attitudes.

If the person on probation is excluded from a geographical area, prevented from entering certain establishments or has to maintain a curfew, the probation practitioner will also help manage these conditions.

In addition to the probation practitioner, the local authority (who the Probation Service work closely with) will also be able to provide advice and support for landlords to help maintain tenancies.

Landlords can make a referral to the local authority (on behalf of the person on probation) if the person on probation needs support to help maintain their tenancy. The person on probation must give their consent for this referral.

Landlords can contact the probation practitioner directly to discuss any concerns they may have in relation to the tenancy. These concerns will be discussed with the person on probation and an agreed way forward to address these concerns will be established. If required, enforcement action can be carried out by the probation practitioner.



How can you contact the probation practitioner?

1. Speak to your tenant at the start of the tenancy and ask them to share their probation practitioner details with you.
2. Search for your local probation office on www.gov.uk/probation-finder and contact them to find details of the probation practitioner.
3. If you are aware that your tenant has recently come out of prison or is on a community order you might want to make a **three way agreement** with them that means you can share information with their probation practitioner to support them to maintain their tenancy. You will need to complete a “3 way agreement” template to do this and can obtain one by emailing the Probation Service at wales.probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk



Knowing What To Say & How To Say It?

Speaking directly to someone who has just left prison might be a new experience for some landlords and you might not be sure about what to say or how to say it! Shelter Cymru have a leaflet for landlords which contains lots of handy hints and tips from landlords for communication and supporting vulnerable tenants. You can view and download a copy here: [A4-Landlords-Advice-Booklet-ENGLISH.pdf \(sheltercymru.org.uk\)](http://sheltercymru.org.uk/A4-Landlords-Advice-Booklet-ENGLISH.pdf)

We know that Landlords sometimes worry about being left to cope on their own with a vulnerable tenant. A clients probation practitioner will be available to provide help and advice to assist you to deal with any challenges should they arise.



Supporting a person on probation if they are struggling to pay Rent

If necessary, a person on probation can be supported to ensure that their tenancy can be sustained by completing an Accommodation Toolkit with their probation practitioner. This helps them with budgeting, setting up a home, and what is expected of them when they enter a tenancy (The person on probation will be given a certificate to show that they have undertaken this training)

If the person on probation is struggling to pay rent, speak to them/their probation practitioner and try to negotiate an agreed way forward.

A landlord can also apply online via the gov.uk website for a Managed Payment to Landlord using the Apply for a Direct Rent Payment service to request payment of rent from a person on probation's Universal Credit

If person on probation receives Universal Credit then extra support is available should problems arise. As long as they give their consent, the landlord can speak to the person on probation's Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) case manager about rent concerns. They will work with all parties concerned to agree the best solution.

Should a tenant fall into arrears, the landlord can apply to DWP for those arrears to be recovered, as long as the tenant remains in the property.

If your tenant is struggling to pay their rent, support may be available from their probation practitioner, their support worker (if they have one) or other organisations (contact information for these can be found on the Rent Smart Wales website on the Tenant page).

The Housing Support Grant funds Local Authorities (via providers such as housing associations and voluntary organisations) to provide

housing related support to people on probation to help manage and sustain their tenancy, such as providing advice on managing their money, supporting access to services which provide opportunities for education, training, volunteering and employment, and services to help address their health and well-being such as mental health, substance misuse or other problems they face. They can also provide access to mediation services between the person on probation and the landlord.



How can you help?

If you have a property to rent and can give a person on probation the chance to get their lives back on track then we want to hear from you. You can also get in touch if you want to know more about our service and how we can help, You can contact us by emailing wales.probationtaskforce@justice.go.uk or visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-probation-service>