



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Accommodation Support for all Prison releases at risk of homelessness during COVID-19

May 2020

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1. Background

The following guidance details the process that must be followed when supporting an eligible prisoner, who are at risk of homelessness, into suitable accommodation during this period.

This guidance covers three cohorts:

- Those released under the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme;
- Those released early on Home Detention Curfew; and
- Those released at their Conditional Release Date.

The guidance also covers, subject to funding and regional priorities:

- Individuals remanded upon conditional bail, subject to provision of suitable accommodation; and
- Current residents at risk of homelessness following move-on from Approved Premises and Bail Accommodation and Support Services (BASS).

This guidance replaces the earlier guidance issued for supporting those released through the End of Custody Temporary Release (ECTR) scheme. The information contained within the earlier guidance has been incorporated into this document.

This guidance, together with both schemes, will be reviewed on a fortnightly basis, to ensure that it provides effective support to operational teams in supporting individuals into accommodation.

Separate guidance has been produced to cover the process for supporting those released under compassionate/medical grounds temporary licence (including [pregnant women and those in Mother & Baby Units](#)).

ECTR accommodation support

Funding

Approximately £3 to £5m funding has been made available to support each of the Homelessness Prevention Taskforces to secure accommodation for those released through this scheme without suitable accommodation to return to.

Eligibility

Mandatory

- Risk-assessed prisoners who are within two months of their release date are being temporarily released from prison, as part of the national plan to protect the NHS and save lives; and
- Individuals released early, subject to Home Detention Curfew.

Supplemental cohort

Individual HPTs should consider whether, subject to funding and regional priorities, the following cohorts could be included:

- Individuals remanded upon conditional bail, subject to provision of suitable accommodation.

They can have this temporary licence revoked and be immediately recalled to prison for breaching these conditions or committing further offences. The releases are being phased over time, commencing from early April (w/c 6th April).

Public protection is paramount. Therefore, no high-risk offenders, including those convicted of violent or sexual offences, anyone of national security concern or a danger to children, will be considered for release, nor any prisoners who have not served at least half their custodial term.

Additionally, no offender convicted of COVID-19 related offences, including coughing at emergency workers or stealing personal protective equipment, will be eligible.

Prisoners who pass the stringent criteria for release will be subject to strict conditions, and will be electronically monitored, including with GPS tags, to enforce the requirement to stay at home. No prisoner is being released if they have symptoms of coronavirus or without housing and health support being in place.

The ECTR scheme will be reviewed every two weeks to understand the utilisation of the funding and ascertain the overall effectiveness.

Objective

This action being taken has been necessary to avoid thousands of prisoners becoming infected, overwhelming local NHS services. This is due to the proximity between prisoners, who often share cells.

Conditional Release date Accommodation Support

Funding

Government has exceptionally decided during these challenging times that, due to potential public health and protection risks, funding of up to £8.5m should be allocated to provide accommodation. Ministry of Justice have secured appropriate funding for a time-limited period to support this process and will be working with a range of public and private sector providers to arrange accommodation.

Provision of temporary accommodation **only** applies between the 11th May and 26th June and **only to those** who are eligible, who are at risk of being released homeless.

The proposed scheme advocates that everyone released during this period, will receive potential accommodation support equivalent to 56 nights at a nightly rate of £65 – recognising not all prisoners would require the full eight weeks of support. This means that £3,640 will be available to utilise in whatever way best meets the needs of that individual.

Eligibility

The temporary accommodation scheme is **only** open to the following individuals and **only** between the period of 11th May and 26th June.

Mandatory cohorts

- Individuals released early through the end of custody temporary release (ECTR) scheme, who are at risk of being homeless upon attainment of their conditional release date; and
- Individuals at risk of homelessness following release from prison.

Supplemental cohort

Individual HPTs should consider whether, subject to funding and regional priorities, the following cohorts could be included:

- Current residents at risk of homelessness following move-on from Approved Premises and Bail Accommodation and Support Services (BASS), who have been risk assessed as suitable to be accommodated in temporary accommodation.

The Conditional release date scheme will be reviewed every two weeks to understand the utilisation of the funding and ascertain the overall effectiveness of the support.

Objective

The overall objective is for probation providers, following an individual's attainment of their conditional release date, to facilitate the migration of the individual from temporary accommodation towards long-term settled accommodation.

2. Local Governance and Delivery Arrangements

The following outlines the governance arrangements that have been introduced to support the provision of accommodation for all prison leavers during this time.

HMPPS

Silver Homelessness Prevention Co-ordination group

A national Silver Homelessness Prevention Co-ordination Group is in place with membership from HMPPS and MoJ Policy. The group meets weekly and links up to HMPPS Gold Command. There is also a Silver Accommodation Policy Group meeting weekly to consider strategic issues

Weekly meetings between Silver Co-ordination Group and Bronze Homelessness Prevention Taskforce Single Points of Contact will be held, until local early release processes have embedded. At this point, the Bronze Homelessness Prevention Taskforces will report through the Divisional Silver Command Structures, with PDDs having overall accountability.

Divisional Silver Command Structures

HMPPS are moving to 12 Regions; however, for the duration of this period the structure will remain as the existing seven Divisions. There are seven Divisional Silver Command Structures.

The Chief Probation Officer will be accountable for the overall £9.5m to £13.5m additional funding that has been secured to support the securing of accommodation. A Finance Business Partner will be allocated to each of the seven regions and HPTs, to support the implementation and monitoring of the payments. Additionally, there will need to be at least three named GPC card holders attached to each HPT to manage the payments, once the referrals have been made. In London, this number is likely to be higher and will be based on likely demand.

Bronze Homelessness Prevention Taskforces

The Homelessness Prevention Taskforce (HPT) Bronze Groups across each of the seven divisions (including Wales) will be responsible for managing the budgets with the Regional Probation Directors being accountable for the budget. The taskforce will also:

- Complete all reporting for allocated accommodation budgets under Covid 19 contingency planning.
- Report to their divisional silver command structures on total numbers requiring accommodation, those who are successfully accommodated via TTG, those who require an interim temporary solution sourced via the HPT and costs in line with the allocated budget.
- Complete the address suitability check for the ECTR cohort as per EDM arrangements.
- Support TTG in accessing temporary accommodation for both cohorts once they have exhausted all existing accommodation options as per [Annex C](#).
- Collate all local voluntary and third sector offers for wrap around support and refer into HMPPS central third sector process to be authorised, in accordance with the published protocol covid19@clinks.org
- Ensuring strategic divisional links are in place with SPOCs from Local Authorities, Police, Housing Associations, substance misuse services and Health more broadly etc
- Effectively manage the shared mailbox for both NPS and CRC to ensure consistent communications, clarity of actions and effective reporting.
- Ensure Management Information of accommodation provided to individuals is recorded to support future evaluation.

- Complete the agreed Management Information spreadsheet and provide weekly returns every Friday by 10 o'clock.
- Support and understand impacts of the implementation of policy in the devolved context of Welsh Government.

A checklist for the HPTs is outlined at [Annex A](#).

In Wales accommodation and health are devolved to the Welsh Government. The Wales Homelessness Taskforce have been working closely with Welsh Government to identify the pathways for release into Wales. A copy of their guidance can be found in the supporting publication '*Guidance to local authorities, Health Boards and HMPPS on supporting men and women due to leave custody – Covid-19 outbreak*'.

Early Release Scheme

For early releases only: All governance and delivery arrangements within the accommodation pathway must operate within the Exceptional Delivery Model for ROTL and TTG, which were distributed to regional HMPPS contacts (Prisons and Probation) on 9th April. Guidance and supporting information can be located here - <https://intranet.noms.gsi.gov.uk/covid-19-coronavirus>.

For early releases only: a referral form for use by TTG Teams for confirming accommodation funding is at [Annex F](#).

Post-Conditional Release Date

For Sex Offenders only: In relation to those convicted of sex offences, then temporary hotels will only be used when all other alternatives are exhausted, will be fully risk assessed (by Police and NPS) and will require the approval of the Chief Probation Officer or Director General for Probation.

Through The Gate providers

Early Release Scheme

All Through the Gate providers must deliver in line with the Exceptional Delivery Model for ROTL and TTG. TTG providers will source accommodation for the business as usual cohort and the early release cohort in line with TTG requirements. The following guidance refers exclusively to the early release cohort:

- TTG providers will receive early release information via the prison
- Assess accommodation status and implement exceptional delivery plan
- Notify HPT of cases where accommodation already exists for accommodation suitability check
- Notify HPT of cases where accommodation has been successfully secured by TTG staff for ROTL accommodation suitability check
- Notify HPT of cases where accommodation has not been secured, outlining offenders needs to enable HPT to consider bulk accommodation offers i.e. hotel etc.
- Ensure that there are consistent conversations with local authorities and ensuring those with a personalised housing plan (England) are following the plan to secure longer term accommodation.
- In Wales the TTG teams should link in with the LAs and the community offender manager to ensure a more sustainable accommodation offer is in train.

A checklist for TTG and Community Offender Managers providing accommodation support for individuals released early under this scheme, is detailed at [Annex B](#).

Post – Conditional Release Date

All Through the Gate providers must deliver in line with the [Enhanced Through the Gate model](#). All Hotel and B&B placements must be authorised by the HPT and should only be considered once all other options have been exhausted.

In relation to all high-risk offenders, accommodation options must be delivered within existing MAPPA arrangements.

Local Authorities & NHS (England & Wales)

The following outlines the governance arrangements that have been introduced by partner agencies during this time, which can be utilised to support prison leavers.

Local Authorities (England)

Following the COVID-19 response, MHCLG have asked local areas to set up local co-ordination cells including local authorities (housing, social care and public health) and NHS partners. It is suggested that HPT's link in with these cells.

Local authorities' statutory responsibilities to prevent and relieve the homelessness of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness still stands during this period and therefore undertake personal housing plans with applicants. The Homelessness Code of Guidance [Chapter 23](#), which sets out the guidance for homelessness services to help those with an offending history should continue to be used.

The Homelessness Advice and Support Team (HAST), based in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government work with all Local Housing Authorities in England on the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Some of the Advisers have been assigned as a contact point to each of the Regional Homelessness Reduction Groups. HAST advisers must only be contacted to facilitate engagement with Local Authorities and must not be approached during this time to discuss issues relating to local authority support or accommodation.

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I)

The following Regional Hubs have been convened by NHSE/I to act as single points of contact, aligned with the following to ensure consistency of approach:

Region	Name	Organisation	Email
London	Jemma Gilbert	Healthy London Partnership	jemma.gilbert2@nhs.net
South East	Olivia Falgayrac-Jones	NHS England & Improvement	olivia.falgayrac-jones@nhs.net
South West	Alison Bell	City Council	AZBell@somerset.gov.uk
	Matthew Hibbert	City Council	MHibbert@somerset.gov.uk
Midlands	Paul Dodd	NHS England and Improvement	paul.dodd4@nhs.net
	Paul Dodd	NHS England & Improvement	paul.dodd4@nhs.net

Region	Name	Organisation	Email
East of England	Jess Stokes	PHE	Jessica.Stokes@phe.gov.uk
North West	Linda Charles-Ozuzu	NHS England and Improvement	lindacharles-ozuzu@nhs.net
Greater Manchester	Milly Bishop	GMHSCP	Molly.Bishop@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk
	Helen Simpson		helen.simpson11@nhs.net
North East & Yorkshire	John Lidell	PHE	john.lidell@phe.gov.uk
Yorkshire & Humber	Andy Maddison	PHE	andy.maddison@phe.gov.uk

NHS England and NHS Improvement have the responsibility for the care of prisoners whilst within the prison setting and for ensuring that appropriate continuity of care is planned when prisoners are released. The care of patients will transfer to CCG commissioned services when they are released.

[Local authorities and healthcare in Wales](#)

The provision of healthcare during COVID has been considered by Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and HMPPS in Wales. Supplementary guidance on how to support people in our care has been detailed in the below



200427 - Process for symptomatic prison

Third sector support services are also engaged in providing wrap around support and a directory of support has been produced and is detailed below. This directory is regularly updated as more support services come on board. Staff are asked to liaise with wales.probatontaskforce@justice.gov.uk for the latest version of the directory.



Wales Service directory.docx

The Wales taskforce is the main point of contact for all accommodation support in Wales. Criminal Justice substance misuse services in Wales are co-commissioned between HMPPS and the four police and crime commissioners. They offer support from police arrest, to court, to probation, to prison and back out through the gate. Referrals are made directly by community offender managers into the services across Wales. Again, information in relation to this can be accessed via the Wales taskforce.

3. Accommodation options – ECTR cohort

Step 1 – Identify whether the offender already has accommodation to be released to.

What do I do if an offender already has accommodation to be released to?

If an individual being considered under ECTR already has accommodation to be released to, then in accordance with the appropriate ROTL EDM, an assessment will be undertaken by the HPT on the suitability of the accommodation and confirmation provided to the releasing Governor that it is appropriate for that individual to be released to that address. Any assessment of suitability should ensure that appropriate isolation (shielding) under NHS guidelines can always be maintained and supported, including the provision of adequate food and appropriate space to sleep. You should refer to the financial guidance relating to universal credit.

What do I do if the individual is symptomatic (COVID-19) and can't return to their home?

In relation to those being considered for the early release scheme, if they are found positive then they will not be released. Any prisoner reporting and/or showing signs of COVID-19 symptoms should be referred to healthcare.

*What do I do if an offender does **not** have accommodation to be released to?*

In all instances, if an individual does not have suitable accommodation available to them, then the TTG worker or HPT should investigate options that have been identified, details of which are outlined in [Annex C](#) and the flowchart at [Annex D](#). Consideration should only be given to booking a hotel once all other possibilities have been exhausted:

- Own or family home;
- Local Authority Provision, including:
 - Housing Associations;
- Voluntary Sector Offer;
- Private Landlords;
- Employers (who provide accommodation as part of employment offer); and
- Hotels and Bed & Breakfast – see [Annex A](#) for more information

In accordance with the appropriate ROTL EDM, an assessment will be undertaken by the Community Offender manager and local police force on the suitability of the accommodation and confirmation provided to the releasing Governor that it is appropriate for that individual to be released to that address. Any assessment of suitability should ensure that appropriate isolation (shielding) under NHS guidelines can always be maintained and supported, including the provision of adequate food and appropriate space to sleep.

Details of where an individual is residing during this early release period, i.e. own home, PRS, hotel etc., should be recorded for Management Information purposes to support future evaluation of the effectiveness of support provided to individuals during this period.

Transportation

To ensure that an individual does not affect others while travelling on public transport, alternative travel arrangements have been secured through the Prisoner Escort Custody Services (PECS) provider, to transport the individual from the prison to the nearest Police station to their alternative accommodation. The service provided by PECS provider, is open to all prisoners who are diagnosed symptomatic before their conditional release date.

Should the individual refuse to stay in the accommodation appropriate advice and guidance on COVID must be shared via the easy read document which can be found on the [EQuIP link](#).

Step 2 – Put in place wraparound support offer from the 3rd Sector and wider local partners

No individual should be provided with an offer of temporary accommodation without consideration being given to the wraparound support that is required.

All offers from the 3rd Sector are being co-ordinated nationally and information will be made available to the Bronze Homelessness Prevention Taskforce for local deployment. Requests for individual support should be logged via the Bronze HPT mailbox.

For those with an identified social care and support needs, prisons should engage with local authorities and social care providers **at the earliest opportunity** in order to plan for safe care upon release. Social care should be in place before release.

The latest Covid-19 updates from Social Care Wales can be found [here](#)

Additional support after release

Supplementary support is also available in England through the NHS Volunteer scheme, who can provide the following assistance:

- Community Response Volunteer: This role involves collecting shopping, medication or other essential supplies for someone who is self-isolating/vulnerable and delivering these supplies to their home.
- Patient Transport Volunteer: This role supports the NHS by providing transport to patients who are medically fit for discharge, as well as taking patients to their essential appointments.
- NHS Transport Volunteer: This role involves transporting equipment, supplies and/or medication between NHS services and sites, it may also involve assisting pharmacies with medication delivery.
- Check in and Chat Volunteer: This role provides short-term telephone support to individuals who are at risk of loneliness because of self-isolation.

In Wales, the Welsh Ambulances Services Trust also arrange volunteer drivers, <https://www.ambulance.wales.nhs.uk/Default.aspx?pageld=100&lan=en> and a hotline has been set up in Wales for people interested in volunteering 0300 111 0124. Volunteer Wales have a dedicated website to find volunteer opportunities during Covid 19 <https://volunteering-wales.net/vk/volunteers/index-covid.htm>

Additional support in Wales can be found via the third sector directory above.

Damages

Where it is demonstrated that the damage has been caused by an individual released early from prison through either of these schemes, then MoJ will be liable for the damage caused. Details of the process to be undertaken regarding damages are outlined in the '[Verification of damages for accommodation booked for offenders](#)' distributed to HPTs. Individual HPTs must work with their Finance Business Partner to manage the process for recording and validating any damages.

Step 3 – Put in place accommodation arrangements for the end of the temporary licence period

Individuals being released through the Early release scheme, are low-risk individuals who have two months remaining before their automatic release date. Therefore, although now located within the community, this two-month period should be treated as the Through the Gate resettlement planning period and teams should utilise this time accordingly to ensure that individuals are appropriately supported once, they are formally released from prison (having completed half of their sentence) back into the community.

During this period, it is essential that the individual offender maintains regular contact with their TTG worker and/or Community Offender Manager (where appropriate).

England only

In accordance with Section 213B of the Housing Act 1996, if there is a risk that upon the conclusion of the early release licence, i.e. at their Conditional Release Date, an individual could find themselves homeless, then Probation must make a referral to the Local Authority, in accordance with the [Guidance: The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017; Duty to Refer](#). **This referral must be made at the earliest opportunity.**

Wales only:

In accordance with Housing (Wales) Act 2014, if there is a risk that upon conclusion of the early release licence, i.e. at their Conditional Release Date, an individual could find themselves homeless, then Probation should engage with the relevant Local Authority, in accordance with the [National Pathway for Homelessness Services to Children, Young People and Adults in the Secure Estate](#).

Specific guidance outlining the approach Welsh Government are asking local authorities to take in relation to people who are homeless or rough sleeping



WG and HMPPS
guidance for prison

Supplementary guidance can be found in the supporting publication '*Guidance to local authorities, Health Boards and HMPPS on supporting men and women due to leave custody – Covid-19 outbreak*'.

If following discussion with the relevant Local Authority it is apparent that the individual does not have suitable accommodation available to them, then the TTG worker or HPT should investigate options that have been identified, details of which are outlined in [Annex C](#) and the flowchart at [Annex D](#).

4. Accommodation options – CRD cohort

This chapter concerns the following groups of prisoners:

Mandatory cohorts

- Individuals released early through the end of custody temporary release (ECTR) scheme, who are at risk of being homeless upon attainment of their conditional release date; and
- Individuals at risk of homelessness following release from prison.

Supplemental cohort

Individual HPTs should consider whether, subject to funding and regional priorities, the following cohorts could be considered:

- Individuals at risk of homelessness following move-on from Approved Premises and Bail Accommodation and Support Services (BASS), who have been risk assessed as suitable to be accommodated in temporary accommodation.

Funding

Provision of temporary accommodation **only** applies between the 11th May and 26th June and **only to those** who are at risk of being released homeless. Accommodation support will be provided on the assumption that everyone will receive up to 56 nights' accommodation, at £65 per night – recognising not all prisoners would require the full eight weeks support; this equates to £3,640 per individual.

Through the Gate preparation

Step 1 – Identify whether the offender already has accommodation to be released to.

What do I do if an offender already has accommodation to be released to?

All Through the Gate providers must deliver in line with the [Enhanced Through the Gate model](#).

Prisons should be advised by **healthcare services** of any individuals considered for release who may require **shielding** and appropriate arrangements made to assure that can be achieved post release.

What do I do if the individual is symptomatic (COVID-19) and can't return to their home?

In relation to routine releases, who have attained their conditional release date, then they must be released **even if they are found positive**, with appropriate arrangements for continued protective isolation.

If following a positive assessment, it is apparent that the individual cannot return to the identified home, due to existing resident's vulnerabilities, then alternative accommodation must be secured, in accordance with the following process.

If those being released have been exposed to the virus, such as cell-sharing or close contact with a symptomatic person, then arrangements should be made for placing the individual in protective isolation for up to 14 days as required.

Note: this alternative temporary accommodation will only be required for the duration of the period that the individual is advised to self-isolate, i.e. 14 or 21 days.

In Wales Prison Health Teams in prison are symptom monitoring men 48hrs before release and the day of release. They then advise the person in our care accordingly and offer advice to anyone they intend to reside with.

*What do I do if an offender does **not** have accommodation to be released to?*

In all instances, if an individual does not have suitable accommodation available to them, then the TTG worker or HPT should investigate options that have been identified, details of which are

outlined in [Annex C](#) and the flowchart at [Annex D](#). Consideration should only be given to booking a hotel once all other possibilities have been exhausted:

- Own or family home;
- Local Authority Provision, including:
 - Housing Associations;
- Voluntary Sector Offer;
- Private Landlords;
- Employers (who provide accommodation as part of employment offer); and
- Hotels and Bed & Breakfast – see [Annex A](#) for more information

What can the funding be used for?

The funding secured to support provision of accommodation post-conditional release date can be used to assist an individual in securing accommodation, both in the short and long-term; **however**, it is not available for use of ongoing payment of rent, as this will be accounted for through the housing element of Universal Credit.

The following are examples of options available that Probation could consider:

Option	Description	Limitations
Rent deposit	Provision of full or proportion of rent deposit to landlords, in line with market practice, i.e. usually to the value of one month’s rent.	There are limits to the amounts that organisations can provide; however, through the Tenants Fee Act, Local authorities are exempt and therefore Probation should engage with Local authorities to act on their behalf to allow improved flexibility in securing accommodation. Any rent deposit must be no more than 5 (five) weeks of rent, if under £50k per annum rent. Any deposit paid must be registered in one of the deposit protection schemes. This was a learning from the Offender Accommodation pilot, which enabled increased use of rent deposits as an incentive. Probation should ensure that arrangements are in place to recover and account for the deposit. Details on how to recover and account for deposits are detailed in the supporting Finance guidance.
Rent advance	Advance payment of rent to a landlord to facilitate the securing of accommodation.	Used by the Offender Accommodation pilot, this concerns the payment of between four and six weeks rent in advance and is in line with commercial rental practices. Note: The issue with rent advance is that the tenant needs to be able to show they have liability for the rental period for a UC claim; so, this can be tricky if the rent is paid too far in advance. Local Authorities often offer 6 weeks, and this is not an issue. However, this can be problematic when landlords ask for 6 months in advance and therefore must not be countenanced as an option.

Note: MoJ funding must only be used to support individuals released up to and including the 26th June and therefore cannot be used to support an individual released after that point.

MoJ funding must also not be used to provide insurance for either landlord or tenant.

Note: a security bond is not a cash or financial payment, it is simply a written guarantee that will place a contractual liability upon MoJ to cover the deposit for the individual's new home. For this reason, individual HPTs must not agree to signing up to a security bond, without formal approval from both MoJ Finance and HMT, as this would lead to MoJ holding a contingent liability on its accounts.

Transportation

To ensure that an individual does not affect others while travelling on public transport, alternative travel arrangements have been secured through the Prisoner Escort Custody Services (PECS) provider, to transport the individual from the prison to the nearest Police station to their alternative accommodation. The service provided by PECS provider, is open to all prisoners who are diagnosed symptomatic before their conditional release date.

Should the individual refuse to stay in the accommodation appropriate advice and guidance on COVID must be shared via the easy read document which can be found on the [EQuIP link](#).

Post – Conditional Release Date

During this period, all individuals will be subject to the recall process and could be recalled to prison if there is a significant breach.

The overall objective for probation providers during this period is to facilitate the migration of the individual from temporary accommodation towards long-term settled accommodation.

Step 1 – Enhanced Through the Gate model

All Through the Gate providers must deliver in line with the [Enhanced Through the Gate model](#). Probation services should take into consideration the lessons learnt through the initial operation of the joint MoJ/MHCLG [Offender Accommodation Pilots](#) (operating out of HMP Bristol, Leeds and Pentonville); information on early learning are outlined at [Annex E](#).

Probation Providers should also consider the support available to support an individual during this period, either through the Voluntary Sector or the NHS Volunteer scheme.

Additional support after release

Supplementary support is also available in England through the NHS Volunteer scheme, who can provide the following assistance:

- Community Response Volunteer: This role involves collecting shopping, medication or other essential supplies for someone who is self-isolating/vulnerable and delivering these supplies to their home.
- Patient Transport Volunteer: This role supports the NHS by providing transport to patients who are medically fit for discharge, as well as taking patients to their essential appointments.
- NHS Transport Volunteer: This role involves transporting equipment, supplies and/or medication between NHS services and sites, it may also involve assisting pharmacies with medication delivery.
- Check in and Chat Volunteer: This role provides short-term telephone support to individuals who are at risk of loneliness because of self-isolation.

In Wales, the Welsh Ambulances Services Trust also arrange volunteer drivers, <https://www.ambulance.wales.nhs.uk/Default.aspx?pageld=100&lan=en> and a hotline has been set up in Wales for people interested in volunteering 0300 111 0124. Volunteer Wales have a dedicated website to find volunteer opportunities during Covid 19 <https://volunteering-wales.net/vk/volunteers/index-covid.htm>

Additional support in Wales can be found via the third sector directory above.

Damages

Where it is demonstrated that the damage has been caused by an individual released early from prison through either of these schemes, then MoJ will be liable for the damage caused. Details of the process to be undertaken regarding damages are outlined in the '[Verification of damages for accommodation booked for offenders](#)' distributed to HPTs. Individual HPTs must work with their Finance Business Partner to manage the process for recording and validating any damages.

Step 2 – Put in place accommodation arrangements for the end of the post-CRD accommodation support

Note: this step does not apply where the individual has returned to their own residence.

The overall objective for probation providers is to facilitate the migration of the individual from temporary accommodation towards long-term settled accommodation.

Probation Providers must, no later than six weeks before the expiry of the temporary accommodation period, commence work on developing a move-on plan, for any individual who is at risk of rough sleeping or homelessness including:

- Make Duty to Refer (England) or Offender Pathway (Wales) referrals to Local Authorities if there is a risk of rough sleeping or homelessness;
- Work with Local Authorities and Voluntary Sector providers to access local incentive schemes, e.g. including rent deposit schemes etc. (see below), to help the individual access Private rented accommodation;
- Probation engaging with Private Rented and Voluntary Sector providers to investigate accommodation options; and
- Engage with Private Rented providers to consider utilisation of potential MoJ funded incentives, including advances, rent deposits etc.; **but, not ongoing monthly rent payments.**

It is the responsibility of the individual to update their UC claim, where they transfer from temporary accommodation (i.e. hotels and B&Bs) to either supported, social or private rented accommodation; Probation providers should support the individual in completing this process.

There remains the operational risk, as present during pre-Covid processes, that an individual will end up homeless upon the expiry of the period of Government funded support. Probation Providers should support the individual to avoid unnecessary periods of rough sleeping/homelessness.

Post-expiry temporary accommodation

If an individual, upon conclusion of their Government funded temporary accommodation, has secured settled accommodation, i.e. long-term residency, then Probation will proceed to engage and support that individual for the duration of their remaining licence period.

If, however accommodation has not been secured, then Probation should have continued engagement with Local Authorities, Private Landlords and the Voluntary Sector to arrange suitable temporary accommodation for the individual. Probation will endeavour to facilitate a move towards long-term settled accommodation as soon as practicable.

All Through the Gate providers must deliver in line with the [Enhanced Through the Gate model](#).

Annex A – Checklist for Homelessness Prevention Task Forces

Mailboxes

Each Homelessness Prevention Task Force will have a shared mailbox. Arrangements must be made for this to be monitored regularly during the day and for email requests to be actioned.

Monitoring and Recording of accommodation requirements

Each Homelessness Prevention Task Force will need to keep Management Information (MI) concerning individuals released during this period.

A spreadsheet has been compiled and distributed to all HPTs, together with supporting operational guidance, detailing the information required to be collated. This spreadsheet must be returned weekly by 10 o'clock every Friday.

Telephone contact details

HPTs should ensure that they receive details of the individuals mobile telephone number from TTG and that this information has been shared with EMS and Community Manager.

Use of CTM services

It is advisable for no more than 3-4 individuals to be accommodated in one hotel or B&B and for this reason the preferred option is to use CTM (previously known as Redfern).

The CTM offer is an existing service delivered to the MoJ and its Agencies. Individual bookings can therefore be secured through that existing service.

HPTs should refer to the detailed Q&A and booking form when making a referral via CTM. Ideally you should email your requirements to north.hotels@travelctm.com.

If you need a last-minute booking (e.g. within 48 hours) you should phone your requirements through to 01274 726424

In all instances when making a booking for an offender, you should ensure that you make clear the booking is for an offender being release either under ECTR or CRD. The cost code remains the same for all cohorts; however, the reason for travel on the booking form is differentiated so it is possible to track the different cohorts.

The booking template will need to be completed when making an email booking or when placed over the phone this will be completed by CTM. Either way the indicated fields will need to be recognised by the booking team for them to process onto their system. Both the booking reference and the cost centre details should be treated as confidential and not be shared outside of booking personnel.

If, however, you are aware of a local hotel and you have made initial approaches to them for potential support then CTM will be able to assist with negotiations on price, unless already agreed. If you haven't agreed the price and T&Cs, then you can share the details of the hotel to CTM who will make direct contact and negotiate price and T&Cs with them, before coming back to you for approval. If you are content, then the process will be the same as above, with CTM confirming the booking with the hotel and invoicing HMPPS direct. HPTs should also be cognisant of the respective T&Cs, when booking through either Calder or CTM, especially as regards damage liability.

Note: when making any hotel booking, either through CTM or Calder, then HPTs must emphasise to the hotel that any room charges, purchases through the TV, calls or bills to the room, **must** be paid by the individual and not HMPPS.

Note: HPTs should refer to the detailed hotel Q&A and financial guidance for further information on the booking process and payment of damages

Use of Calder hotel booking service

As detailed in [Annex C](#), HPTs can make bulk bookings (i.e. for 10 or more individuals) via Calder, under the Government agreement for the exclusive use of hotels and venues. If there is a requirement for exclusive use of hotels or venues for block bookings for early release prisoners, then this is being supported, through the CCS Call Off Contract, by the framework supplier Calder Conferences. All hotel bookings (both individual and bulk) must be assessed for suitability by the Community Offender Managers.

The Calder Conferences Crisis Team should be contacted directly at: - covid19@calders.org.uk or 0113 397 9432. Escalations should be referred to Graham.Perry@crownccommercial.gov.uk or 07768 921379.

Note: As HMPPS has an enabling agreement in place with Calder, Calder will place the booking with the hotel and be billed by the hotel. Calder will then bill HMPPS.

The following steps are to be followed when making a booking through Calder:

- Confirm with TTG teams that there is a need for 10+ individuals to be housed in one area
- Ring Calder and outline requirements, including numbers and location;
- Calder will provide details on available hotels
- Consider and confirm or decline offer
- Calder will then make the booking
- Calder will then notify you of the hotel and the contact details
- You are then free to contact the hotel direct

Note: it would be advisable to let Calder know that the arrivals may arrive separately. Also, when using Calder, group bookings are preferable, although it would be advisable for public protection, for not more than 3 or 4 to be housed in one location (see annex C for more information).

Note: when making any hotel booking, either through CTM or Calder, then HPTs must emphasise to the hotel that any room charges, purchases through the TV, calls or bills to the room, **must** be paid by the individual and not HMPPS.

Monitoring and Recording of Expenditure

Early Release Scheme

Budgets for the Calder and Redfern options have been agreed and further guidance distributed through the allocated Finance Business Partners.

Approximately £3 to £5m funding has been made available in the first instance to support each of the Homelessness Prevention Taskforces to secure accommodation and is subject to the following considerations:

- The funding should only be used if the prisoner has no existing accommodation (e.g. with family) that was deemed appropriate and all existing local routes for accommodation had been explored and no provision had been found;
- The budget will comprise up to £65 per prisoner per night, up to a maximum of 56 nights – recognising not all prisoners would require the full 2 months support. Occasionally, it is recognised that it may cost more than £65 per night to secure accommodation. This needs to be reasonable and agreed with CTM at the point of booking. CTM will confirm any costs outside of the £65 with HMPPS finance and confirm approval.
- The HPT will be required to complete a record, capturing all bookings and associated costs to be returned to Divisional Silver Command on a weekly basis.
 - Reporting month-by-month financial spend

- Where people are being accommodated, i.e. private, LA, hotel etc. and
- Whether that payment is permanent or until ROTL period.

Post – Conditional Release date

Budgets for the Calder and Redfern options are being agreed and further guidance will be distributed through the allocated Finance Business Partners

Approximately £8.5m funding has been made available to support each of the Homelessness Prevention Taskforces to secure accommodation for individuals post-conditional release date and is subject to the following considerations:

- The funding should only be used if the prisoner has no existing accommodation (e.g. with family or they are unable to return due to being diagnosed symptomatic);
- The budget will enable the provision of accommodation for the designated period or until they have secured their own independent living arrangements (whichever is sooner).
- The budget will comprise up to £65 per prisoner per night, up to a maximum of 49 nights – recognising not all prisoners would require the full seven weeks support.
- The HPT will be required to complete a record, capturing all bookings and associated costs to be returned to Divisional Silver Command:
 - Reporting month-by-month financial spend
 - Where people are being accommodated, i.e. private, LA, hotel etc. and
 - Whether incentive payments have been used to secure accommodation.

What can the funding be used for?

The funding secured to support provision of accommodation post-conditional release date can be used to assist an individual in securing accommodation, both in the short and long-term; **however, it is not available for use of paying ongoing monthly rent**, as this will be accounted for through the housing element of Universal Credit.

Note: Any funding considered to support Private Rented Sector accommodation access must only be used as a last resort and only when all other opportunities via local authorities, charities etc have been exhausted

Annex B – Check List for Individual TTG Workers

ECTR Scheme only

The following details a range of actions that an individual TTG Worker should consider undertaking to support someone who is being considered for early release under the exceptional ROTL arrangements; they are not drafted in sequential order and may not apply in every case.

Before the Prisoner is released on ROTL

- Does the prisoner have an address to go to?
- Have you notified the Bronze HPT via the shared mailbox?
- Is that address suitable?
- Are there any existing residents subject to self-isolation arrangements?
- Have you recorded their mobile number and shared with HPT?

If they have accommodation

- Inform Governor of details of suitable address
- Arrange for travel for prisoner to suitable address
- Contact EM supplier and inform them of address
- Contact prisoner upon their arrival to emphasise importance of ongoing engagement

If they do not have suitable accommodation

- Agree with Local Authority if they have capacity to support finding accommodation; if so then
- Approach LA housing team determine whether individual is a priority individual; if not, then
- Engage with known local Private Landlords or Voluntary Sector organisations, to determine whether suitable accommodation can be secured; if not, then
- Approach Regional HMPPS Homelessness Prevention Teams via the shared mailbox to request either:
 - Bulk bookings, via Calder (**10 or more individuals in one locale; however, no more than four per site, i.e. hotel**); or
 - Individual bookings, via Redfern.

Finances and community support

Note: detailed information on financial support is available in the partner publication, HMPPS Financial Support for End of Custody Temporary Release during COVID-19.

- If required, ensure that the Governor has authorised the use of the Discretionary Housing payment of £50;
- Check with Private Landlord or B&B, if require security bond;
- Engage local Healthcare providers regarding provision of any prescription, Social care and GP registration;
- Engage Local Authority (in accordance with Homelessness Reduction Act or National Offender Pathway), referring the individual as being at risk of homelessness at the end of the period on temporary licence, and
- Undertake resettlement planning during this period to support the individual when they move on from the temporary licence to their formal business as usual on release licence.

Post – Conditional Release date

All Through the Gate providers must deliver in line with the [Enhanced Through the Gate model](#).

Annex C – Accommodation provision

All Releases

The following outline the potential options available for the provision of accommodation for those who do not have suitable accommodation to be released to, irrespective of under what scheme they are released under. Every effort should be made to ensure that in all cases all existing accommodation options are fully explored with the individual and ruled out before considering options 6 & 7.

Note: In relation to all high-risk offenders, accommodation options must be delivered within existing MAPPA arrangements.

ECTR only

Individuals being considered for early release through the ECTR scheme, will only be approved for release by the Governor, once suitable accommodation has been confirmed.

National Position

The statutory position is that local authorities have a duty to provide settled accommodation to those who have priority need, such as pregnant women, someone with dependent children and those deemed vulnerable by the local authority.

If the local authority has a reason to believe that the person has priority need, then they should offer them interim temporary accommodation whilst they assess any longer-term housing duties towards them

Housing authorities have duties to try and prevent or relieve homelessness (in accordance with Homelessness Reduction Act in England and Housing Wales Act) for all applicants who are eligible for assistance and are homeless or threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days, irrespective of whether or not they may have a priority need for accommodation; **however**, there is no guarantee that the person's homelessness will be relieved, and **there is no duty for the authority to provide them with accommodation.**

Local authorities must take reasonable steps to support homeless applicants to find suitable/affordable accommodation; however, if the applicant is not within priority need, then they do not have a requirement to accommodate them. In England, the local authority has a duty to provide the applicant with a personalised housing plan that has been agreed with the applicant.

Accommodation Options

The following details the options that could be utilised by TTG Workers or Community Offender Managers to assist in securing suitable accommodation for those with no address on release.

Options – in order of priority	Points to consider	Who arranges	Does Universal Credit or Housing Benefit apply	Who pays
1st. Own accommodation	<p>a. Confirmation that the address is suitable and that the individual can return there, in accordance with health advice.</p>	TTG Worker & HPT	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable
2nd. Local Authority provision	<p>a. TTG worker to ensure Duty to Refer or Offender Pathway referral is made to Local Authorities in all cases.</p> <p>b. Local Authority to process homelessness assessments and to manage placements where there is a reason to believe they have a priority need;</p> <p>c. If there is no reason to believe an individual may have a priority need;</p> <p>d. TTG worker should investigate with LAs if they have, in addition to their statutory responsibilities, the capacity to support cohort immediately during the social distancing period;</p> <p>e. HPT/TTG must cultivate active relationships with Local Authority leads to facilitate these arrangements;</p> <p>f. HPT/TTG should investigate the potential to develop arrangements with LHAs, where probation (via a provider) source accommodation and LHAs provide some financial incentive;</p> <p>g. TTG engage with the local co-ordination cell for those individuals requiring supported housing and where an accommodation offer without health and/or social care support would increase vulnerability.</p> <p>h. Process for referrals must be agreed at a local level and should take account of reduced access</p>	TTG worker	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Benefit where HB eligible accommodation; • Note: if a Local Authority places an individual into Temporary or Supported Accommodation this will not be processed through UC and is still in Housing Benefit. • For non-priority individuals MoJ/HMPPS may need to top up if rent exceeds the Housing Benefit the LA can reclaim from DWP; • MoJ/HMPPS where the LA cannot reclaim Housing Benefit

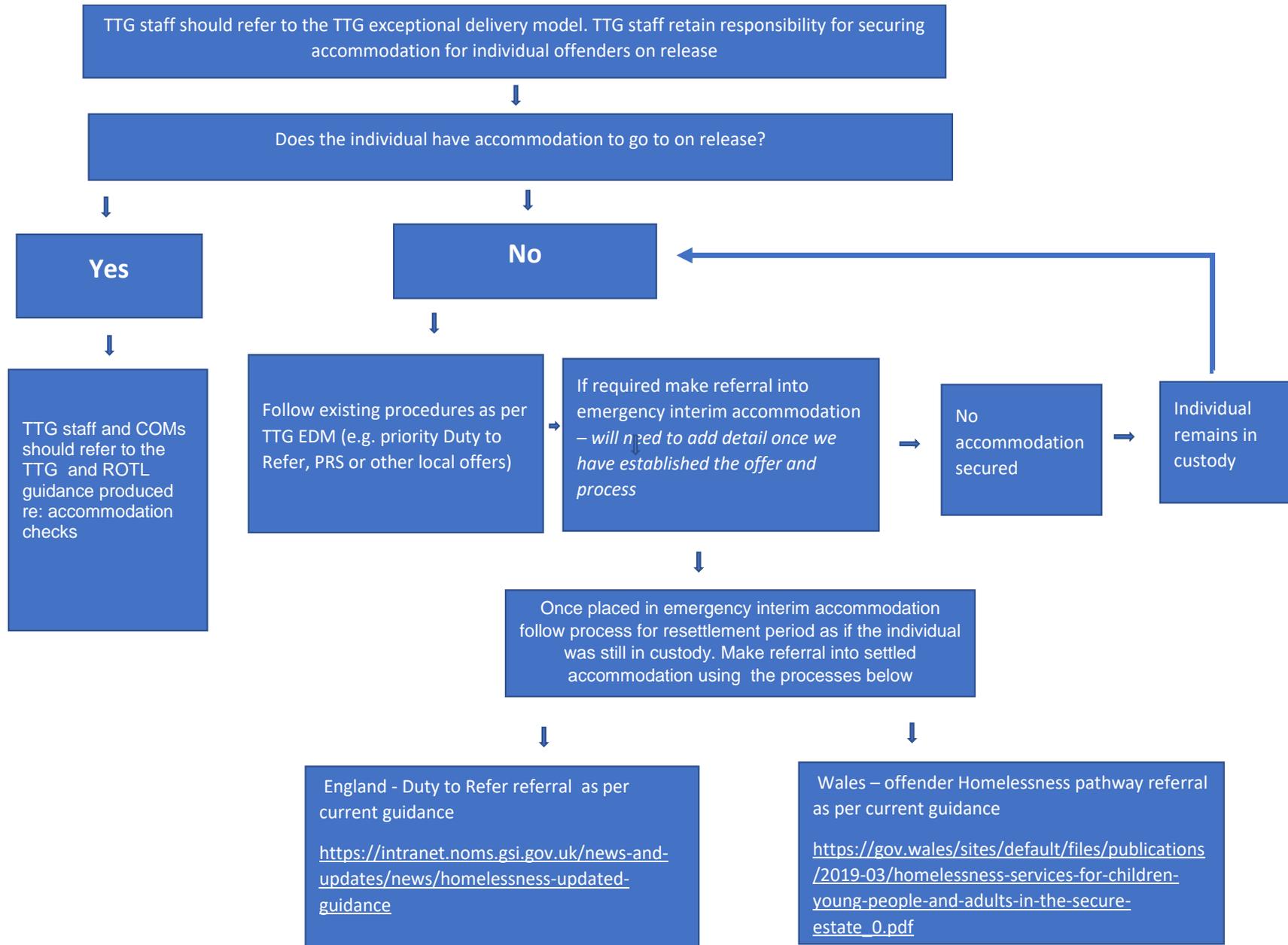
Options – in order of priority	Points to consider	Who arranges	Does Universal Credit or Housing Benefit apply	Who pays
	<p>of face to face assessment services at point of release</p> <p>i. Confirmation of arrangements should be relayed up through Bronze command.</p> <p>j. Only in ECTR cases: If accommodation secured, then details transmitted to Governor for release.</p>			<p>from DWP for the accommodation.</p>
<p>3rd. Voluntary Sector</p>	<p>a. If Local Areas are approached by local Voluntary Sector providers, or Community interest organisations, then these offers should be feedback via bronze command to HMPPS centre;</p> <p>b. HPTs should approach HMPPS centre for accessing centrally organised offers for accommodation and support, through the voluntary sector in accordance with the published protocol covid19@clinks.org</p> <p>c. Only in ECTR cases: If accommodation secured, then details transmitted to Governor for release.</p>	<p>HPT & HMPPS</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UC covers (some) housing costs, claimant should request direct payment to landlord via UC • HMPPS for any grant funded support

Options – in order of priority	Points to consider	Who arranges	Does Universal Credit or Housing Benefit apply	Who pays
<p>4th. Private Landlords – Note - Updated guidance was published on home moves 12/05. Viewings are now permitted providing social distancing is followed and no party is self-isolating or shielding.</p>	<p>a. TTG workers should investigate their existing Private Landlord contacts, with a view to investigating whether individuals could be accommodated;</p> <p>b. HPT should ensure that TTG Workers or Community Offender Managers apply to the respective Governor for the Discretionary Housing Payment to facilitate access to the PRS.</p> <p>c. Note: consideration of using rent deposits or advances must only be used as a last resort and only when all other opportunities via local authorities, charities etc have been exhausted.</p> <p>d. Only in ECTR cases: If accommodation secured, then details transmitted to Governor for release.</p>	TTG worker	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UC covers (some) housing costs, claimant should request direct payment to landlord via UC • HMPPS for payment of Discretionary housing payment and/or security bond etc.
5th. Employers	<p>a. TTG Workers or Community Offender Managers should investigate local opportunities known to them for engaging with employers, who might be seeking employees and can provide accommodation;</p> <p>b. HPT's should therefore approach potential employers, especially those in business areas where there is a current Covid-19 related Government priority;</p> <p>c. TTG Workers and HPTs should engage with the Regional New Futures Network (NFN) contacts;</p> <p>d. Only in ECTR cases: If accommodation secured, then details transmitted to Governor for release.</p>	HPT, TTG Workers, NFN & HMPPS	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UC covers (some) housing costs, claimant should request direct payment to landlord via UC.

Options – in order of priority	Points to consider	Who arranges	Does Universal Credit or Housing Benefit apply	Who pays
6th. Redfern – for individual bookings in one region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regions should consider making case-by-case requests via Redfern, for bookings in one area; b. Regions should identify specific requirements, relative to the individual and their needs, e.g. vulnerable groups and place booking, and c. Only in ECTR cases: If accommodation secured, then details transmitted to Governor for release. 	HPT	No	MoJ/HMPPS – including for payment of discretionary housing allowance and/or security bond
7th. Calder hotels – for block bookings of 10 or more in one region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regions should consider making a request via Calder for arrangements of block bookings for groups of offenders in one area; b. The minimum number for booking is ten; however, for purposes of management, this might also be the maximum number for consideration; c. <u>Risk consideration should be given to requesting that no more than 3 or 4 individuals are accommodated in the same location;</u> d. Consideration should be given to location and proximity to home area to facilitate future move-on; e. Regions should identify specific requirements, relative to the individual and their needs, e.g. vulnerable groups and place booking, and f. Only in ECTR cases: If accommodation secured, then details transmitted to Governor for release. 	HPT	No	MoJ/HMPPS – including for payment of discretionary housing allowance and/or security bond

Annex D – Early Release accommodation support – Process map

Note: the hyperlinks in the diagram to not work; please refer to the main body of the guidance.



Annex E – Offender Accommodation pilot – early learning

Early findings and lessons learned from the process evaluation of the Offender Accommodation Pilots can be used to inform the early release programme. It should be noted that these are very early findings and come from 14 interviews which were carried out before the Covid-19 situation. Findings should be considered indicative. Applicable lessons learned include:

- **Challenges of complex needs** - There were questions around the suitability of referrals for those with more complex, specialist or long-term needs, particularly in relation to mental ill health and substance misuse. There are considerations around this group's ability to maintain tenancies.
- **Lack of engagement** - Some potential service users did not engage with the programme. Reasons for this included the geographic location and living arrangements of some accommodation which was perceived to be unsuitable, and individuals not being able to comply with the regulations around their accommodation. This was also thought to lead to individuals withdrawing from the pilot.
- **Low housing availability** - The availability of housing and competitive markets impacted on the ability to source suitable accommodation for individuals on the pilot. Participants were concerned about where people on the pilot would be placed in the future given the lack of options for housing.
- **Difficulty engaging landlords** - Participants reported strong resistance among private landlords in particular, to consider individuals on the pilot as tenants. The main reason for this was that some landlords viewed service users as untrustworthy and therefore less likely to pay rent on time and maintain the property, and that there were more 'desirable' tenants.
- **Flexibility in housing provision** - Providers found they needed to be more flexible and creative in how they source accommodation and work with stakeholders across the housing sector, including temporary accommodation. Developing more staged approaches to housing. Providers viewed this as positive as it helped service users to get used to living by themselves.
- **Inaccurate data on releases** - Getting accurate information about release dates proved challenging, and when information was provided, it was not always up to date. This caused problems for providers in planning activities and support, particularly when arranging gate pick-ups and settling people into their new accommodation.
- **Importance of relationships with partners** - Partnerships between suppliers and local services were perceived to be critical to the effective delivery of the pilot, particularly in sourcing accommodation and meeting the range of complex needs service users had.
- **Deposit in advance** - Providers being able to offer six weeks deposit to landlords upfront, which was considered a key benefit of the pilot. Participants reported that the deposit enabled them to have constructive conversations with landlords and was perceived to be an important incentive for those offering accommodation in the private rented sector.
- **Challenges of housing benefit payments for young individuals** - Housing Benefit payments were also perceived to be problematic for younger people aged between 25-35 as they qualify for lower benefit rates, meaning that more expensive accommodation is less accessible to them.

Annex F – Referral for accommodation funding



Homelessness Prevention Taskforce (HPT) Referral by TTG Teams for Accommodation Funding

PLEASE NOTE: This referral form is only to be used for service users who have been assessed as suitable for early release on End of Custody Early Release (ECTR) or ROTL Special Purpose Licence for medically vulnerable and/or pregnant service users, who do not have suitable accommodation.

Funding can only be provided for direct accommodation costs which may be provided for up to 12 weeks. The Responsible Officer will remain responsible to source move on accommodation when the CRD licence begins. If any questions are not answered on the form, it will be returned to the NPS/CRC hub and not processed.

All forms should be returned to relevant HPT team which corresponds to the release area:

Wales	Wales.ProbationTaskforce@justice.gov.uk
London	London.ProbationTaskforce@justice.gov.uk
East, Kent, Surrey, Sussex	East-KSS.Probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk
South West, South Central	SWSC.Probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk
North West, Greater Manchester	NWGM.Probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk
North East, Yorkshire, Humberside	NEYH.Probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk
Midlands	Midlands.ProbationTaskforce@justice.gov.uk

Staff name and contact details:	
Date of Referral to HPT:	
Service user name:	
DOB:	
Type of release licence: (ECTR/HDC/SPL ROTL)	
CRN:	

NOMIS Number:	
PNC:	
Earliest Date of Release:	
CRD Date:	
Offender Manager contact details:	
Releasing Prison:	
Duty to Refer – date referral submitted to LA:	
Location of accommodation sought:	
Index offence:	
Location of victims(s) where applicable	
Potential licence conditions (including exclusion areas):	
<p>Risk of serious harm:</p> <p><i>Please provide evidence for your assessment</i></p> <p><i>Public:</i></p> <p><i>Known Adults:</i></p> <p><i>Children:</i></p> <p><i>Staff:</i></p>	
Gangs links (Y/N) provide details if Yes:	
<p>Known protected characteristics and other needs when considering accommodation:</p> <p><i>[Age; disabilities; health issues; gender reassignment; race or ethnicity; religion or belief; pregnancy/maternity; marriage/civil partnership, sex (m/f); sexual orientation].</i></p>	
Can the person live independently?	
Are they suitable to share with others?	
Summary of accommodation options exhausted by TTG team and barriers identified:	

Type of accommodation sought from HPT (e.g. Hotel, B&B, Private Sector, Third Sector) – please refer to published guidance and Q&A for HPTs, where hotels are sought via Redfern or Calder.
Other financial support requested (e.g. rent deposit, advance):
'Wrap around' support needs (e.g. substance misuse, domestic abuse support, life skills (including access to catering facilities) pharmacy, mental health, dentistry):
What are the 'Move on' accommodation plans? (Funded accommodation is now available for 12 weeks):
Please include any other information relevant to the placement: