

# Where to get Support Following Your Release



This leaflet has been written with the support of people who have left prison to make sure the advice and guidance is useful to you.

It is designed to give you helpful tips and tell you where you can get more detailed advice and support if you need it.

## Finding somewhere to live

If you think you might be homeless when you are released, probation pre-release teams will work with other services to help try and support you to find somewhere to live before you leave prison.

Where accommodation can't be found straight away, you can still find support after release to help you find somewhere to live in the future. **If you are on probation after release**, your probation officer can refer you to a specialist accommodation advisor to help you find accommodation (called a CRS Accommodation (for men) or Women's Services contractor).

Everyone has the right to make a homeless application to a local authority, there is no difference if you are in prison. Prison/Probation staff should refer you to your local authority to help you (this is called a Duty to Refer referral).

If arrangements are not in place before you are released from prison, then you should contact the local authority you were referred to. They should tell you how they can support you to find somewhere to live

**If you are not on probation after prison**, there are a wide range of national organisations that can help you such as:

# Support Organisations

Name of Organisation	Type of Support Provided	Contact Details
Crisis	A charity for homeless people. They provide 1-2-1 support and advise access to accommodation.	0300 636 1967
NACRO	Supports people within housing, education, support and advice to young people and adults.	0300 123 1999
RECOOP	Resettlement care and support for people over 50 with a conviction.	<a href="mailto:info@recoop.org.uk">info@recoop.org.uk</a>
Shelter	Helps people struggling with homelessness or bad housing through advice, support and legal services.	080 8800 4444
StreetLink	Helps connecting people sleeping rough with local services that can support them.	0300 500 0914
Veterans Gateway	Support for armed forces in housing, finances, employment, mental and physical health.	0808 802 1212

This list represents some of the support services available to everyone in the community, however **if you are subject to Probation Supervision, please discuss your needs with your Probation Worker** who can make a referral to specific Probation-funded services in your area who can give you more individual support.

# Health and Wellbeing



## Continuing medication from Prison

When you leave prison, you will normally be given medication to ensure there are no gaps in your treatment. The only time this might change is if you use opiate substitutes like Methadone or Subutex. Prison healthcare teams will help you to prepare for your release. In some cases, they will help you connect with community healthcare services. If you have a Probation Worker, speak to them for additional support if required.

## GPs

Register with a GP as soon as possible. Doctors will help you with medication and referrals to other important health services. Prison healthcare will be able to help you, if you know where you are being released.

## Dentists

It can be difficult to find a dentist. You may need to phone around local dentists to see if they are taking new patients. If they don't have space, you may be put on a waiting list. If you need urgent care, contact your dentist as some may have emergency slots. You can also call NHS on 111. GPs cannot provide dental care.

## Mental Wellbeing

Mental health can affect 1 in 4 people in their lifetime and being released can change how you feel. Speak with someone you trust if you are struggling with your mental or physical health – remember.... it is okay not to be okay. If you are struggling to cope or have suicidal thoughts, there is support available for you.

You can call the **Samaritans on 116 123** at any time. If you don't feel able to talk, you can text the word **"SHOUT" to 85258**, to start a text a conversation with a trained volunteer.

If you have been released and are struggling to cope, tell your GP or community based mental health team.

# Support Organisations

Name of Organisation	Type of Support Provided	Contact Details
Mind	A charity who promotes mental health and offer information, advice, and community support.	0300 123 3393
NHS	Providing health and social care services for people with mental health disorders.	111 999
Samaritans	A free and confidential national support service to people who are struggling to cope.	116 123
Stay Alive	Suicide prevention app with a safety plan, customisable reasons for living and photo bank.	Stay Alive in App Store
Support Line	Support with suicide prevention, self-harm, abuse, trauma, depression, and anxiety.	0800 689 5652
Together UK	Working alongside people with mental health issues on their journey towards independent lives.	020 7780 7300

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# Employment, Training and Education



When you get released from prison, if you don't already have a job, an important place to start is **Jobcentre Plus**. You can click here to find your nearest centre <http://find-your-nearest-jobcentre.dwp.gov.uk>

The Job Centre aims to help you find work in the UK. They provide resources to help you search for work. If you don't have an up-to-date CV, your local Job Centre will help you with writing one and sometimes will offer CV building classes or '**get employment ready**' forums which will cover all aspects of ways to find work and interview techniques. Services may vary but its worthwhile checking out what's on offer.

**The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)** offer a lot of support in helping people prepare for (and get) paid employment. Talk honestly to your work coach about your barriers and what you would like to do, to allow them to find you the right opportunities.

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If despite all your efforts you do not have the prospect of employment on your release, you should make a claim for Universal Credit as soon as possible.

# Support Organisations

Name of Organisation	Type of Support Provided	Contact Details
Forward Trust	Helping people affected by drug or alcohol issues, past offending, homelessness, or unemployment.	Telephone 020 3981 5525
Job Centre Plus	Government-funded employment agency who aim to help people find employment in the UK.	Telephone 0800 169 0310
NACRO	Supports people within housing, education, support and advice to young people and adults.	Telephone 0300 123 1999
St. Giles Trust	Helps people to improve their skills and access employment opportunities.	Telephone 020 7708 8000
Unlock	Give support such as: how to disclose to employers, criminal record checks and more.	Telephone 01634 247350 or Text 07824 113848

## Universal Credit

On release if you do not have employment you can make your claim online for Universal Credit (UC) at [www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit). If you do not have access to a computer, you can make your application over the phone **0800 169 0345** or ask your Probation Worker for help. For help with your application, you can call: **0800 328 5644**.

# Let's Talk Money



Do get ID as soon as you can. Some types of ID e.g. a provisional or full driving licence provide photo ID and proof of address. You can apply for a provisional or full driving licence at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Most benefits require a bank account. If you had one before, check if it is still usable and if not, what you need to do to reactivate it. If you are homeless, you may still be able to open a bank account – HSBC offer a No Fixed Address service.

If there is a problem with your income or you get into financial difficulty, do not ignore it as things can quickly get worse. Speak with your employer or those involved in your finances to help you make realistic plans. There may be specialist support available to help you manage financial problems.

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## Support Organisations

Name of Organisation	Type of Support Provided	Contact Details
Citizens Advice	Provides free advice and support to manage debt.	0800 144 8848 (Adviceline England) 0800 702 2020 (Advicelink Wales)
Pension Advisory Service	Provides support to people thinking about retiring or those who have already retired.	0800 011 3797
Step Change	Helps people with debt problems take control of their finances and their lives.	0800 138 1111
The Money Advice Service	Offers free debt advice and helps people deal with creditors and manage their money.	0800 138 7777
Turn2us	A charity providing practical help to support people suffering financially.	0808 802 2000
Universal Credit	Universal Credit is to help with your living costs if you are on low income or out of work.	0800 328 5644

# Family and Significant Others



Positive relationships and support from family and friends can be important when adjusting to life outside prison. In addition to practical things, like finding a home and a job, they provide important emotional support. Things, like finding a home and a job, they provide important emotional support.

Thinking about changes that might have happened for your family and loved ones whilst you have been away can be difficult. It can take time to adapt to after release.

If you don't have a big support network, find out what's available in your area by searching on-line, looking in local newspapers for sports clubs or other activities that you enjoy. You might even want to consider volunteering to support local community projects. Making these contacts will help you build social links in your community.

## Faith Groups

Some people connect with religion or spirituality at different times in their lives. If you have developed a connection like this whilst being in Prison, there are faith groups which you can join in the community once you are released. If you are nervous about a faith group accepting you due to your past, please speak to the Chaplaincy or visit [www.welcomedirectory.org.uk](http://www.welcomedirectory.org.uk)

**In the community**, if you have a Probation Worker they can advise you of services in your local area.

### Top Tips

- It can help manage expectations if you involve your family and significant others in plans for your release at an early stage. This can help everyone to prepare for how things are likely to be and support you in making positive decisions, including balancing caring responsibilities with licence requirements.
- It is likely that you, your family and significant others will have changed whilst you have been away. Focus on developing your relationships to reflect these changes rather than trying to recreate the past.
- Following any separation, relationships can change. Your family may not know how they can support you when you return home. It can still feel like a big step to find your place again in your home.
- If you have children, you may find that their needs, interests, and activities have changed during your time away from them. Getting to know your child is a normal part of parenting, whether you live with them all the time or not.



# Drug and Alcohol Support



A range of services can help you in your recovery or offer you advice. Support Organisations might be different from region to region.

There will be substance misuse services in the prison. They can support you with contacts in your local area. It is important if you start work in prison to try to continue this in the community.

**It's likely your tolerance to drugs will have reduced in prison meaning there is a higher risk of overdose following your release.** This is because many people think they can take the same amounts as they did before going into prison. The reality is that your body is no longer used to these amounts. If you take the same amount, you increase the risk of an accidental overdose.

## Top Tips

- Being honest with yourself is the first step to recovery. Openness and honesty with others will help any alcohol and/or drug teams work out the best treatment for you.
- Understand your triggers and steps to overcome them – this will help you to stay on track and reduce chances of relapse.
- Be honest with family and loved ones. Recovery can be difficult alone, and you might need the support of those around you. Let your family know how they can help you during your recovery and discuss how to spot any signs that you could need support.
- If you're using opioids, always carry a Naloxone kit. Naloxone is a medicine which rapidly reverses an opioid overdose and can be supplied by drug services without a prescription. Let other people know where you keep it and how to use it. It could save your life in the event of an overdose.

# Support Organisations

Name of Organisation	Type of Support Provided	Contact Details
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	Provides support from people who have suffered with an alcohol dependency.	0800 917 7650
Intuitive Thinking Skills	Provides a programme intervention for people with addictive behaviour.	0800 069 9198
Narcotic Anonymous (NA)	Provides support from people who have suffered with a drug dependency.	0300 999 1212
SMART Recovery	Provides support to people looking to change their addictive behaviour for the long-term.	0330 053 6022
Talk to Frank	Provides honest advice about drugs and their effects. They have a 24/7 hotline.	0300 123 6600

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# Domestic Abuse



Domestic abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence.

Relationships should be built on respect and equality, not power and control. While you may not think much of some behaviours at first, disrespectful behaviours set a tone in a relationship. If your partner is possessive, insulting, yelling, humiliating, or disrespectful in any way, take a note.

## What to do if you are being abused

It is important to acknowledge that there are many different paths you can take if you feel that you are in an abusive relationship and that no one will force you to leave the relationship if this is not what you want.

The options include:

- Contacting support agencies such as Womens Aid or the Police
- Leaving the relationship and going to a safe place such as a refuge
- Remaining in the relationship but knowing how to keep yourself safe

**Domestic abuse within the LGBT+ community.** Abuse does not discriminate and occurs proportionally across all types of relationships; partner abuse can happen within the LGBT+ community.

Please know **you are not alone** and there are support services that can help you to leave if you want to. **Find out how to get help if you or someone you know is a victim of domestic abuse.** [www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help)

# Support Organisations

Name of Organisation	Type of Support Provided	Contact Details
Freephone 24-Hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline	24-hour support for women and children against domestic abuse. Live chat facility is available at <a href="http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk">www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk</a>	0808 2000 247
Galop	LGBT support victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence, hate crime, honour-based abuse, forced marriage & other forms of abuse.	0800 999 5428
ManKind	Provides information, support, and signposting services to male victims of domestic abuse.	01823 334244
Men's Advice Line	Non-judgmental emotional support, practical advice, and information.	0808 8010327
Respect	Works with domestic abuse perpetrators and male victims through a confidential service.	0808 8010327 (Victims) 0808 8024040 (Perpetrators)
Women's Aid	Support for women and children affected by domestic abuse. Live chat is available.	<a href="https://chat.womensaid.org.uk">https://chat.womensaid.org.uk</a>

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