

I am in prison / being released from prison, what are my housing options?

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IN PRISON / ON REMAND

How to keep my home

Despite the length of your sentence, you may still be able to keep your rented property through the following methods:

1. Make sure your rent is paid on time and seek immediate help if you fall into arrears
2. Ensure your property is being looked after and remains in good condition whilst you're away
3. Inform any service providers that you will be away to avoid falling behind on bill payments, such as utility bills (gas, water, electricity) or others such as TV/internet or direct debits for your mobile phone.
4. Keep your belongings in the property

It is vital you do all you can to keep your property as finding housing upon release is very difficult.

Claiming Housing Benefit

ON REMAND

You can claim housing benefit whilst on remand if:

- Your home is unoccupied / you not renting out your property
- You can demonstrate that you intend to return home by e.g. continuing to pay your rent and by keeping your belongings at your house
- You will be remanded in custody for no more than 52 weeks
- You must inform the Housing Benefit office you are in prison and ensure your prison completes a Notification of Remand in Custody Form and sends it within 14 days of your contact with the Housing Benefit office.
- You may be entitled to make a new claim for Housing Benefits whilst on remand, speak to your benefits officer in prison.

IN PRISON

- You may be entitled to housing benefit if your total sentence is 13 weeks or less. However, if you have already spent 13 weeks on remand, you will not be entitled to Housing Benefit
- If you can't claim Housing Benefit and have no other way to pay your rent, you should speak to your prison Resettlement Officer about surrendering your tenancy to avoid falling into arrears.

Under eviction

- If you have been served with a notice of eviction, you should seek advice from your Prison Resettlement Officer as soon as possible

- You should contact your landlord immediately to find the reason behind the eviction and see if you can resolve the issue through mediation. Your Prison Resettlement Officer can speak to your landlord on your behalf.
- If the landlord continues with the eviction, you'll have the opportunity to submit your defence to the courts.
- If your social landlord has served you with a notice of eviction, you can appeal the eviction procedure. You should be sent notifications from your landlord whilst in prison. Seek advice from your Prison Resettlement Officer to assist you to defend yourself.
- You can contact the Council on 01737 276790 for further advice

ON RELEASE

Released on licence

If you are released on licence, you should speak to your probation officer to see if you are able to be referred to a probation hostel (approved premises). However such accommodation is very limited and is usually reserved for those considered high risk or who are under multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA).

If you are provided with accommodation at a probation hostel, you must ensure:

- You adhere to your licence agreement to increase your chances of finding accommodation after your licence comes to an end.
- You continue looking at your housing options whilst you remain in your hostel so you are not homeless when your licence comes to an end.
- You can contact the Council on 01737 276790 for further advice. It is vital you contact us as early as possible so we have enough time to assess your situation. In order to receive the most effective assistance, you should provide the Council with details of your offending history, details of your probation/contact numbers for probation and a risk assessment etc.

Homeless on release

If you have nowhere to live once you are released from prison, there are many routes you can take to find yourself accommodation. It is important to start looking before you're released with the help of your prison resettlement officer.

Finding housing upon release is very difficult, so it is important you consider all your options.

Staying with family / friends

- Returning to a family or friends home can be a suitable short-term housing solution after prison as it allows you more time to find your own accommodation.
- If you have broken ties with your family/friends, the Prison Resettlement Officer can help you rebuild these relationships. If your friends/family can see you have made progress during your time in prison and you are willing to address past issues, they may be more prepared to allow you to return to their property.

Private renting

- You can look for private rented accommodation. This route will give you the option to look for a home in an area of choice and the type of property you choose.
- You can secure a tenancy if you have savings or friends/family who can lend you money
- You can apply for Housing Benefit on the Council website (www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk) to help you with your rent payments.
- You can speak to the Council for further advice on 01737 276790
- You can use the internet to search for private rented accommodation via search engines such as Google or other websites such as RightMove, Zoopla, Gumtree, or Roombuddies (see under 'Accommodation' in the Useful Contacts section on page 8).

Supported Housing

Supported housing offers specialist support to address a tenant's specific issues and individual needs and individual needs. They can help you with living independently and help you integrate back into the community. To be considered for supported housing, you generally need to be referred which can be done through your offending manager, support worker or through the Council.

Housing Register

You may be entitled to access social housing by joining a Council Housing Register. Each Council has its own eligibility criteria, which you can access through their website to see if you qualify to join. Please see the Joining the Housing Register webpage (URL on Useful Contacts page) on the Council website: www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk.

Council

You can contact your local Council who can offer you advice and assistance depending on your situation. If you have a local connection to this borough, the Council can offer you financial assistance to help you secure a private rented property through the Single Persons Rent Deposit Scheme. Call on 01737 276790 for further details.

Hostels

See page 11 for a list of hostels that are in or close to this borough, which offer short-term accommodation. This can provide you with enough time to secure yourself new permanent accommodation and to apply for any support or benefits you may be entitled to.

eSOS (East Surrey Outreach Service)

eSOS offers support and access to hostels/supported housing to those who are currently rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. The Council or other support workers can refer you or you can contact eSOS directly (see Useful Contacts section). You must have a local connection to access their service.

LOCAL CONNECTION

It is generally more beneficial to you if you approach a Council you have a local connection. You have a local connection Reigate and Banstead if:

- You have lived in the borough for 6 out of the last 12 months, or 3 out of the last 5 years.
- You work in the borough
- You have a close relative (mother, father, sister, brother, adult son or adult daughter) that currently lives in the borough and have lived here for at least the last 5 years.
- Other special circumstances

Your local connection will be the area where you were living in prior to your prison sentence.

LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is used to work out how much housing benefit you would be entitled to if you rent your property from a private landlord.

- You can claim LHA if you are a private tenant who needs help with paying rent, whether you are working or claiming other benefits
- You will not be eligible for LHA if you have savings of £16,000 or more, unless you are getting Pension Credit (guarantee credit part).
- Your LHA calculation is based on:
 - Where you live in the UK
 - Whether you live in shared accommodation
 - The number of bedrooms needed for the number of people living in the property

For further details and current local LHA rates, please see our [Local Housing Allowance](#) webpage found in the Benefits section of our website.

MONEY ADVICE

BENEFITS

You may be entitled to benefits to increase your income.

- Contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau who can advise you on benefits you may be able to claim (see Useful Contacts section).
- The [Government website](#) provides in-depth information and qualification rules about various types of benefits.
- You can apply for Housing Benefit through the [Council website](#).

FREE FINANCIAL ADVICE

Money advice agencies can offer you free financial advice including:

- Advice on how to manage your finances
- Creating a personal budget with you
- Helping you find which benefits you may be entitled to
- Searching for any relevant government-led schemes which may be of help to you
- See under 'Money Advice' section in Useful Contacts on page 9

EMPLOYMENT ADVICE

Will I be faced with legal restrictions when applying for jobs because of my criminal record?

Generally, people with criminal records can apply for jobs but they may be asked by the employer to make a criminal record disclosure.

However, you should check if you have any restrictions from applying for particular jobs or types of employment, e.g.

- If you are currently on licence and your licence states conditions that can relate to employment, for example, not being able to go to a certain area will mean you cannot apply for jobs there or travel via that area.
- If you are subject to an order that imposes certain prohibitions which may affect employment. For example, if you are under: a Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO), a Public-Protection Order or a Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).
- If you have been barred from regulated activity with children or adults

You should speak to your support worker/offending officer if you are unsure whether you are affected by any conditions.

Will my criminal record affect my chances of getting a job?

This will depend on the employer's policy recruiting people who make a criminal record disclosure.

- When you apply for a job, it is important you show the employer that you have general skills such as: communication, customer relations, flexibility, team work, reliability, motivation etc.
- Applying for jobs where you have relevant skills and experiences will improve your chances of securing a job.
- If you have gaps in your employment history due to time spent in prison, you may find it more beneficial to create a skills-based CV rather than a chronological work history, which will highlight employment gaps. You can see examples of skills-based CVs on the [National Careers Service](#) website.
- If you have a serious offending history and you do not have any specific skills for a certain type of job, it is usually advised that you apply for jobs in sectors such as construction or warehouse work.

- There are many organisations that employ people with offending backgrounds. Some organisations offer support programmes which help ex-offenders get back into work.
- Visit your local Jobcentre

How can I increase my chances of getting into work?

- Improve your understanding of if and when you may need to disclose your criminal record. Speak to offender-support organisations for advice.
- Apply to jobs that suit your skill set, experience and knowledge.
- Seek advice and support to draft your CV/applications to ensure you're giving yourself the best possible chance.
- Dedicate time to prepare for your interviews.
- Ensure you have at least 2 recent references.

INTERVIEW SUPPORT

If you need help to prepare for your interview, you can find a vast amount of advice available on the Internet. The following websites offer specialist advice on interview support:

- www.reed.co.uk
- www.monster.co.uk
- www.totaljobs.com

You can also find other interview support by simply entering '*interview preparation*' in a search engine such as Google.

ORGANISATIONS THAT CAN SUPPORT YOU

<p>Nacro Resettlement Plus Helpline offering advice and information to ex-offenders, serving prisons and their friends and families and to organisations working with them</p>	<p>www.nacro.org.uk 0300 123 1999</p>
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<p>National Careers Service</p> <p>Government led service which provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work.</p>	<p>https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/</p>
<p>St Giles Trust</p> <p>Offers ex-offenders support on: employment, community based training and housing/emergency accommodation</p>	<p>www.stgilestrust.org.uk 020 7708 8000</p>
<p>Unlock</p> <p>Offer help to people dealing with the effects of having a criminal record including how to disclose to employers.</p>	<p>www.unlock.org.uk 01634 247350</p>
<p>Working Chance</p> <p>Helps female offenders make the transition into employment</p>	<p>www.workingchance.org</p>
<p>Working Links</p> <p>Runs programmes to fully support ex-offenders to regain employment</p>	<p>www.workinglinks.co.uk 0800 917 9262</p>
<p>YMCA</p> <p>Work alongside prisons and probation services to support young offenders with training opportunities pre-release</p>	<p>www.ymca.org.uk 0207 186 9500</p>

USEFUL CONTACTS

Accommodation		
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (Housing)	housing.advice@reigate-banstead.gov.uk	01737 276790
East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS)	theeast Surrey outreach service@homegroup.org.uk	01372 378628
Gumtree	www.gumtree.com	
RightMove	www.rightmove.co.uk	
RoomBuddies	www.roombuddies.co.uk	

Alcohol and drugs		
Catalyst	info@catalystsupport.org.uk	01483 590150
SADAS	www.sadas.org.uk	01483 590150
i-access– Community Drug and Alcohol Team (Surrey & Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust)	www.surreydrugandalcohol.com	0300 222 5932 and 01737 230050
Surrey Drug and Alcohol Care (SDAC)	www.surreydrugcare.org.uk	0808 802 5000
The Salvation Army	www.salvationarmy.org.uk	01737 768084
Benefits and welfare support		
Government website	www.gov.uk	
Jobcentre Plus	Redhill Jobcentre Plus, 15 London Road, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 1BQ	0800 055 6688
Surrey Local Assistance Scheme	http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/advice-guidance-and-support/financial-advice-and-benefits/surrey-local-assistance-scheme	03444 111 444
YMCA East Surrey: Benefit Advice	http://www.ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk/benefits-advice/	01737 378489
Citizens Advice Bureau		
Redhill & Reigate	24 Cromwell Road, Redhill, RH1 1RT	03444 111 444
Banstead	The Horseshoe, Banstead, SM7 1BQ	
Family Support Agencies		
FamilyLine (Surrey)	www.familyline.org.uk	0808 800 5678
Family Support Team	http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/community_and_living/family_support_team/index.asp	01737 276089
Healthcare/Mental Health/Disability Support		
East Surrey Hospital	Canada Avenue, Redhill, RH1 5RH	01737 768511
Community Mental Health Recovery Service	Shaws Corner, Blackborough Road, Reigate, RH2 7DG	01737 272301
Surrey Disabled People's Partnership	www.sdpp.org.uk	01483 750973
Surrey Choices	www.surreychoices.com	01483 806806
First Steps (Surrey)	www.firststeps-surrey.nhs.uk	0808 801 0325
Money Advice		
Community Debt Advice (CDA)	www.cdamoney.org.uk	01737 887558
Step Change	www.stepchange.org	0800 138 111
The Money Advice Service	www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk	0800 500 5000
Offender Support		
Supporting Others Through Voluntary Action (SOVA)	www.sova.org.uk	
Trailblazers	www.trailblazersmentoring.org.uk	1296 444 105
Women in Prison	www.womeninprison.org.uk	0800 953 0125
Rough Sleeping		
East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS)	theeast Surreyoutreachservice@homegroup.org.uk	01372 378628
StreetLink	www.streetlink.org.uk	0300 500 0914

Social Care		
Adult social care	http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/care-and-support-for-adults	0300 200 1005
OTHER		
YMCA East Surrey	www.ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk	01737 779979
Youth Support Service	www.surreycc.gov.uk	01327 363655
URLS		
Joining the Housing Register	http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20298/home_choice/158/joining_the_housing_register	
Applying for Housing Benefit	http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20048/making_a_claim_for_housing_and_council_tax_support/487/claim_benefit_support_online	

Hostels and night shelters

Below are details of hostels and night shelters which are in or close to the borough of Reigate and Banstead.

- The following hostels may have rooms available on a 'direct access' basis. This means that you can contact them yourself on the day that you are homeless and try to book a room for that night.
- If you get a room in a hostel, you may be able to stay there for up to 4 weeks.
- You will have to show identification when presenting at the hostel.
- If certain circumstances, the Council is able to refer you to hostels.

Hostels: Self referral and agency referral

<p>Acacia House</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 bed supported accommodation for single men and women aged 18-65 who are committed to recovery from alcohol and drug misuse • 6 month to 2 year stay • Does not accept anyone with convictions for arson or other serious offences. 	<p>1 Acacia Avenue, Woking, Surrey, GU22 0BE</p> <p>01483 740774</p>
<p>Crawley Open House</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 places (7 double and 14 single rooms) for men, women or couples, aged 18+ 	<p>Riverside House, Stephenson Way, Three Bridges, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 1TN</p> <p>01293 447702</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows pets • Maximum stay 6 weeks (variable) 	<p>www.crawleyopenhouse.co.uk</p>
<p>English Churches Housing Association</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 bed hostel for single men and women aged 18 – 65 • 8 self-contained flats comprising of individual bedrooms with shared kitchen and bathroom. Each flat accommodates between 5-8 people • A 3 bed detox unit plus a 2 bed assessment unit for clients with alcohol problems and want to stop using it and remain abstinent. • Maximum stay 2 years 	<p>Vaughan House, 5-7 Chertsey Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4HD</p> <p>01483 504704</p>
<p>LeatherHead Start Hostel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hostel for single men and women aged 18+ • 9 single rooms and a double room for an established couple • Emergency short-term accommodation • 24 hour support • Referral and resettlement into move-on accommodation • No maximum stay 	<p>3 Church Road, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 8AT</p> <p>01372 377790</p> <p>www.leatherheadstart.org</p>
<p>Mulberry House</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 beds for women aged 18-35 • 15 single rooms and communal facilities • Maximum stay 2 years • Pregnant applicants can stay until you are 7 months pregnant • Self-referrals accepted • Must have a connection with the Surrey County area 	<p>32 Epsom Road, Guildford, Surrey. GU1 3LE</p> <p>01483 577375 (please call before you approach)</p>

Number 5 Project

- 14 beds for single men and 2 beds for women
- Open 6pm – 10am
- Provides hot evening meal and breakfast in the morning
- 7 days stay (variable)
- Offered support and advice
- Residents must be out during day

3-5 York Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4DR

01483 303646

n.five@btinternet.com

www.numberfiveproject.co.uk

St Joseph's Night Shelter

- Single and couples aged 16+
- 10 individual units, communal bathroom and eating areas
- Hot evening meal and breakfast provided
- Dogs allowed
- 28 days stay

Hunston Road, Chichester, PO20 1NP

01243 537934

admin@stonepillow.org.uk

(You must visit their day centre The Hub or call 01243 775925 first)

www.stonepillow.org.uk

Wayside

- For vulnerable single women aged 16-39
- 17 single rooms, 3 of which are adapted for people with disabilities and 2 rooms for 2 people sharing
- 24 hour staff support
- Self-referrals accepted, phone for an application
- Will accept applicants with drug, alcohol or mental health problems who are committed to treatment
- Will not accept applicants with history of extreme violence to others
- Maximum stay 2 years
- Operates a waiting list

42 Croydon Road, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 0PQ

01737 248304

www.waysidehostel.org.uk

waysidehostel@keychange.org.uk

YMCA

- 42 beds for single people aged 16-30
- Self contained bedsits
- Maximum stay 2 years
- Can self-refer but must have local connection to Reigate/Redhill and Banstead area
- Referrals also available through the Council

Hilbrook House, 68 Brighton Road,
Redhill, Surrey, RH1 0PQ

01737 773089

housing@ymcaeastssurrey.org.uk

www.ymcaeastssurrey.org.uk

York Road Project

- 11 beds for men and women aged 18+
- Open 6pm - 8.30am
- Must pay £2 a night
- Breakfast and evening meal provided
- Maximum stay 21 days (flexible)
- Offered support and advice

1 York Road, Woking, Surrey, GU22 7XH

01483 728739

info@yorkroadproject.org.uk

www.yorkroadproject.org.uk