

Reducing Reoffending Board (RRB)

4th December, 2-4pm

Theme: Housing, Homelessness, and Reoffending

Attendees:

Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)

London Probation (LP)

Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)

London Prison Group (LPG)

Youth Justice Board (YJB)

Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

His Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS)

His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS)

London Councils

His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS)

LB Haringey

LB Greenwich

LB Tower Hamlets

Clinks

Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

Greater London Authority (GLA)

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

Youth Justice Board (YJB)

Agenda Item 2 | Context Setting

Recent events, including SDS40 early releases, highlight the need for strong partnerships in housing provision for prison leavers. Key challenges include short sentences, complex inter-agency relationships, and individuals with no recourse to public funds. Holistic resettlement plans integrating housing, mental health, and substance misuse support were emphasised.

An overview of Probation's Community Accommodation Services (CAS) framework was presented. There are three tiers: CAS 1 (approved premises for high-risk offenders), CAS 2 (bail accommodation), and CAS 3 (temporary accommodation for those at risk of homelessness).

The Homelessness Prevention Team run the allocation of CAS 3. There are 551 dispersed units managed by Housing Action Management (HAM) in London. Resettlement Panels are held with all LAs to allocate CAS accommodation and to try to seek placements within the local authority. The housing Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) is provided in

London by St Mungo's and focused on advice and guidance and liaising with key partners to support referrals. For women this is part of a holistic service.

The Greater London Authority (GLA) gave a brief overview of the Rough Sleeping Action Plan. While the GLA doesn't have a statutory duty to house homeless people, it commissions services to help rough sleepers, including outreach and long-term accommodation. Data shows that 1.7% of rough sleepers came from prison, and many are assessed as in priority need due to vulnerability.

The GLA's Rough Sleeping Action Plan was cited as a key resource for partnership strategies. Collaboration between probation services, local authorities, and providers like HAM was praised for effective responses to SDS40 early releases.

Agenda Item 3 | System Improvements

The Board discussed the following question: *The availability of housing is extremely limited. How can we strengthen cross-border working to improve consistency and maximize access to housing for people at risk of reoffending across different local authorities in London?*

The discussion included the following:

- More collaboration across local authorities, mental health services, and Homelessness Prevention Teams is needed to increase permanent housing options for those with complex needs.
- Cross-London initiatives and pooled budgets could bring together teams across London to better address homelessness and housing for prison-leavers.
- Joint working and sharing good practices is critical as highlighted in the success of initiatives like Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme (AFE0).
- Increased collaboration across local authorities to share successes and ideas and build social proof is needed.
- Increased collaboration and reciprocal relationships between boroughs to support ex-offenders would be welcome.
- The importance of sub-regional commissioning and ring-fenced funding was emphasised.
- A mechanism to enhance coordination of landlords and housing availability needs to be developed. A pan-London forum for landlords and local authorities would be welcome to improve coordination and address the challenges with high rental prices and the availability of housing for ex-offenders.
- It was agreed that early intervention is vital to save tenancies and prevent homelessness.

Agenda Item 4 | System Improvements

The Board discussed the following question: *What are some of the other levers that CJS agencies and VCS partners have to prevent homelessness and improve outcomes for people at risk of reoffending?*

The Board recognized the progress being made in collaboration between housing, health, and criminal justice services.

The discussion highlighted that:

- It is uncommon for individuals to transition directly from prison to homelessness, many experience temporary housing arrangements before facing homelessness. Individuals serving short sentences or held on remand are particularly vulnerable, as they often leave prison without adequate support, increasing their risk of homelessness.
- The importance of conducting pre-release assessments for individuals exiting prison was reiterated. While many local authorities strive to assess housing needs before release, logistical barriers can hinder these efforts.
- Improved coordination between prisons, probation services, and housing authorities, especially for individuals being released from institutions outside of London, is needed.
- Housing applications must be initiated early as the process can take considerable time.
- Mental health and substance misuse services could be incorporated into housing assessments and support structures to ensure individuals facing complex needs receive timely and coordinated care.

Agenda Item 5 | Police and Crime Plan Consultation Workshop

The draft Police and Crime Plan focuses on reducing violence, improving justice, and supporting victims. Key themes include homelessness prevention, mental health support, and employment opportunities for individuals leaving prison. A gendered approach and early vulnerability prevention were also discussed to reduce criminalisation of vulnerable groups.

Participants were encouraged to provide feedback on the draft plan through multiple channels. This input will refine the final version and address critical issues.