

RS10

Ymchwiliad i gysgu ar y stryd yng Nghymru

Inquiry into rough sleeping in Wales

Ymateb gan: Cwmni adsefydlu cymunedol Cymru

Response from: Wales Community Rehabilitation Company

Wales CRC Accommodation Support

On reception into custody, all men and women receive a Basic Custody Screening 2 (BCST 2). Contractually, we must complete this with the first 5 days and since contract implementation we have never dropped below our performance target of 95% completions.

Part of this assessment includes a discussion around housing and what the particular housing needs might be.

In 2017, the Resettlement Team completed over 3965 BCST 2 in HMP Cardiff, and of those over 1401 identified a housing need at that initial assessment. In HMP Swansea the Resettlement Team completed over 2195 BCST 2 of which over 578 identified a housing need at that point in time.

We find that the majority of men/women entering custody have a housing need that falls in to one of the following categories:

1. Person was NFA before entering custody and needs to secure housing for release
2. Person is unsure about whether they can return to previous property, or their sentence prevents them from returning to previous property and needs to secure alternative housing for release
3. Person had a property/tenancy which can be retained under the new Wales Housing Legislation due to short sentence
4. Person had a property/tenancy which needs to be closed down due to long sentence and will need to secure another property for release

If somebody falls into category 2 or 3, they will have a referral to Prison Link Cymru which is present and operating in all prisons. Prison Link Cymru will provide support to either retain or close down a tenancy depending on the needs of the person. If somebody needs to source new accommodation a housing app will be made to the relevant local authority area as soon *as the resettlement team are made aware of the need*. The housing app will be sent to both the Local Housing Authority as well as the Offender Manager so that they can provide the risk information.

Due to the average length of sentence in our local prisons (HMP Cardiff and HMP Swansea), we usually have less than 12 weeks to work with somebody before they are released, so housing apps are sent to the local authority areas less than 12 weeks as opposed to the 12 week mark or sooner. The average length of sentence in the South Wales Public Sector Prisons is:

HMP Cardiff:	12 weeks
HMP Swansea:	12 weeks
HMP Prescoed:	156 weeks

Another common factor is that the resettlement team aren't made aware of the housing need until the final pre-release review. Every man/women leaving custody has a review approximately 7 days prior to release, the resettlement team will update the plan which will be handed to the Offender Manager to pick up on release. It is often at this point in which a housing need is identified where it wasn't before. This is often due to:

1. A change in circumstance. The person is unable to return to the property they initially stated during their first assessment when coming into custody. For example, a relationship may have broken down and the person can no longer return to the family home.
2. The accommodation the person stated they could return to has been deemed unsuitable by the Offender Manager.
3. The person did not disclose an accommodation need during the initial assessment and has only voiced it during the final interview.

All of these circumstances will result in a last minute referral to the local housing authority in their area of release. As the housing need is based on self-reported information from the person in custody we are reliant on timely and accurate upon which we can act.

Further challenges that the resettlement team face come from Local Authority Housing requesting the finite detail to identify whether there is a duty to house the Service User, for example, medical information on illness/disability etc. At a recent training event lead by Joy Williams it was stated that this type of work should be completed by the Local Authority as opposed to the Resettlement Team, as they are not resourced to complete this work and have difficulty extracting this level of information from prison healthcare departments.