

If you are being released from prison and you are facing homelessness or you are unable to return to your property, the Council can assess your circumstances to see if we can provide you with assistance.

We will make an assessment to see if we can help you with your housing issue. We will require your prison documents, identification, an up-to-date risk assessment and contact details for your Probation officer.

We can provide you with advice and assistance to help you find accommodation. We will not have duty to provide you with emergency accommodation or housing unless you are considered to be eligible, homeless and have a priority need.

### The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Since April 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act has changed the homelessness duties for all Local Authorities in England.

The new legislation means that all applicants who are eligible and about to become homeless will be entitled to receive advice and assistance in order to prevent them from becoming homeless.

The Act changes the way we address and resolve the issues around homelessness by introducing two new duties in addition to the main housing duty. These two duties are:

#### 1) Duty to Prevent Homelessness

Hertsmere Borough Council will provide advice and assistance to people who are about to become homeless within 56 days. If you are eligible for assistance and at risk of losing your home, we will try to prevent your homelessness by working with you to, either, help you remain in your current accommodation or help you find somewhere to else suitable for you and your household.

#### 2) Duty to Relieve Homelessness

If you are already homeless, and considered eligible, Hertsmere Borough Council will provide advice and assistance to help you find suitable accommodation. If you are considered to be a 'vulnerable person', the Council can offer you emergency accommodation while we work with you to find alternative accommodation that is suitable for you and your household.

## Retaining accommodation while in custody

You may be entitled to Housing Benefit while you are remanded into custody or sent to prison. Housing Benefit can sometimes help pay your rent if you are in prison but only for 13 weeks if you have been sentenced and up to 52 weeks if you are remanded in custody. If you do not already have a housing benefit claim, you will need to make an application for a new claim. It is your responsibility to tell the Council about any changes in your circumstances.

For further information, you can visit the Shelter website which provides advice on how to retain a tenancy after going into custody and how to surrender a tenancy so you do not fall into rent arrears.

If you give up a tenancy that is suitable for and available to you, the Council may conclude that you are intentionally homeless. . This means that you will only be entitled to limited support from the Council if you are homeless upon your release from prison.

### National Probation Service – Hertsmere area

62-72 Victoria Street, St Albans, AL1 3XH  
01727 847787

## Other Support

### HACRO

HACRO offers support for offenders, potential offenders and their families to manage positive change in their lives in the Hertfordshire area. They can provide education and training initiatives.

Their contact details are: 01727 854 727  
info@hacro.org.uk

### St Mungo's Offender Service

St Mungo's Offender Services team can provide support to people in prisons. They can also offer ex-offenders accommodation such as hostels or semi-independent housing.

Their contact details are: 020 3856 6000  
info@mungos.org