

Putting Prison Behind Me

Building a better life

Start

Home

Hope

Future

Our starting point

Many people who have served long prison sentences struggle to adapt to community life when released, with accommodation being an especially challenging issue. We wanted to consider how different parts of the 'system' might work together in a compassionate way, to help resettle people in appropriate accommodation.

System barriers

Leadership exercised primarily within organisations and job descriptions

Purpose and outcomes defined primarily within services against national KPIs

Exhausted front line teams focused on managing demand and risk

Reducing inequalities

Prevention



Trio lead

Andrew Connolly

OPD Operational Lead

PROBATION

Trio members

LA Vivienne Feeny

Megan McDonald

Deborah Irwin

Renell Williams



Our system shifting trio

Our trio combines the expertise of probation professionals, local authority housing expertise and VCSFE experience in housing.



Lightbulb moments

We all acknowledged the importance of Public Protection and the need to make decisions that keep victims and potential victims safe. Several 'Aha' moments stood out in our work together:

- As a group from different parts of the system, we connected with the vulnerability of someone about to be released after decades in prison, uncertain about housing beyond Probation Approved Premises.
- We couldn't fix the housing crisis, but we could work together to make the process more humane, connecting as individuals.
- Starting the housing process earlier for people being released, supporting Housing Officers with pre-release assessments, and improving communication could help manage expectations.

Our biggest challenges

The housing crisis and limited affordable accommodation are well-known, but highlighting long-term prisoners' needs was crucial. Housing colleagues face inexhaustible demand, making tough decisions daily. Acknowledging this challenge, we focused on how to provide compassionate service pre-release. Despite limited accommodation, the project gained momentum with Vivienne's involvement.

Our insights and breakthrough

Offering something 'different' by starting the housing process earlier and collaborating with Housing Officers for pre-release assessments. This ensures system-wide understanding of the vulnerability and needs of long-term prisoners. We recognised that joint housing assessments, early Duty to Refer, and a 'Memorandum of Understanding' guide expectations and accommodation options.

Next Steps

- Embed pre-release housing assessments in formal agreements between LA Housing and GMPS.
- Create a Housing Manifesto to manage expectations with compassion.
- Understand priority need for long-term prisoners, considering trauma.
- Grow Local Authority Housing and Greater Manchester Probation Service Offender Personality Disorder Pathway relationship and share learning nationally.
- Explore commissioning opportunities - What can be put in place to support long term prisoners' (Lifer/IPP) who are deemed non-priority need.
- Ageing prison population – Develop an enhanced partnership approach from Housing & HMPPS.

Now

Hopeful

Focused

Reflective

We need to have a thoughtful, compassionate response to the question 'Where will I go when I am released from prison?'

GOODLIVES GM

A strategic partnership between Innovation Unit and Greater Manchester Combined Authority