

## Manchester City Council Report for Information

**Report to:** Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee - 21 May 2024

**Subject:** Support for people Leaving Prison

**Report of:** Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

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### Summary

This report provides an update on the probation reset detailed in the Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament in April. It also provides an overview of the accommodation and support provided for people who have left prison and links with the homeless service.

### Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information in the report.

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### Wards Affected: All

<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city	None
<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments	The Community Safety Strategy 2022-25 seeks to contribute towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act. The impact of this strategy on protected groups was considered through an Equality Impact Assessment.

<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Helping ex-offenders rehabilitate into society through housing and employment contributes towards having a thriving and sustainable city.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The CSP is involved in a range of work that supports communities to be more resilient and safer, providing them with confidence and enabling them to reach their full potential. It also includes diversionary, reflective, and rehabilitation work with young people and people on probation.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	This report will highlight how the work to achieve community safety contributes towards this outcome by ensuring neighbourhoods are safe and therefore a destination of choice for people to live, visit and work.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

### **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

The proposed activity will be undertaken with already approved budgets.

### **Financial Consequences – Capital**

Not applicable.

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

Community Safety Partnership Overview - Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee - 7 November 2023

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This report provides an update on the probation reset detailed in the Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament in April 2024. It also provides an overview of the accommodation and support provided for people on probation on release from probation and the links with the homeless service.

## **2.0 Background**

2.1 This report was requested as a follow up to the Community Safety Update report to Communities and Equalities Scrutiny in November 2023 and provides additional information that was requested from the Committee.

## **3.0 Probation Reset**

3.1 From 29th April, the probation services will undergo a reset, so that practitioners prioritise engagement and supervision at the points in the sentence where it has the most impact on people on probation.

3.2 Cases that continue with Probation contact in the final third are:

- Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Cases of all Categories and Levels, MAPPA is a system to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders.
- All cases directly managed by a Specialist Probation Practitioner in the National Security Division (NSD)
- All cases identified as very high risk of serious harm
- All cases with current active child protection procedures in place
- Those subject to an Intensive Supervision Court pilot (until such time as the evaluation is complete)

3.3 For other cases, the following will apply:

- Active supervision appointments with individuals subject to licence will cease after the two-thirds point. One further follow-up appointment is required for licence cases only midway through the final part of the licence.
- Active supervision appointments under post-sentence supervision will also cease to be delivered unless cases fall under the exemption criteria. For these exempt cases supervision will continue at current frequency.
- For Community Orders or Suspended Sentence Orders with a Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAR), RAR appointments and delivery of activity days will cease to be delivered after two-thirds of the order has passed.

3.4 Further policy and guidance has been developed for staff and probation staff are working with partners to identify wider impact.

3.5 The ministerial statement is available in full: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2024-03-11/hcws332>

## **4.0 Prison Discharge Team and Homeless Assessments**

- 4.1 The Housing Solutions Service, within the Homeless Service, has a specialist team to respond to individuals who are leaving custody with no settled accommodation. Historically the ability for that team to undertake assessments whilst people are in custody has been difficult to undertake due to access and coordination issues, however, in recent months the Housing Solutions Service has been able to undertake a number of full homeless assessments whilst people are in custody. Due to the volume of assessments required, and the planning and preparation required to undertake the interview in comparison to the resource available, the prison discharge team are not able to undertake direct assessments for each individual.
- 4.2 In order to improve the number of individuals who are aware of their accommodation options prior to release, the Prison Discharge Team have made changes to processes in agreement with colleagues from prison and probation. The Duty to Refer process has changed so referrals from staff working with an offender can reach the team directly rather than through a triage and filtering process. This has led to a change in the information which is gathered from the referring agency in order that information can be shared and discussed soon after the referral has been made. This information supports an “in-principle” decision being reached by the Prison Discharge Team about an individual’s priority need status. Priority need decisions are made under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 to determine whether emergency accommodation is provided. People leaving custody are therefore better informed on their accommodation options and whether emergency accommodation will be provided within the remit of the legislation or an alternative offer will be made such as Community Accommodation Service (CAS3) options or the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme (AfEO). The full homeless assessment can subsequently be completed once the individual is released from custody to determine any ongoing duties.
- 4.3 These changes have been positively received by offender services as there is a clearer position on the immediate accommodation options upon release from custody.

## **5.0 Housing Related Support**

- 5.1 The Homeless Service commissions a range of housing-related support services to people who need short term support to enable them to re-establish and maintain independent living. People using these services are likely to have a range of support needs and be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, including people leaving prison.
- 5.2 Housing related support will support people to:
- Improve their mental and physical health and wellbeing
  - Develop money management and budgeting skills
  - Access opportunities for employment, education, training and volunteering
  - Increase their self-confidence and self-esteem

- Reconnect with family and friends and the wider community
- Develop a range of independent living skills leading to long term and sustainable independence

5.3 Commissioned housing related support is largely for single people. There are around 500 bed spaces, including specialist services for young people and women, people with complex needs, and for people with substance misuse issues. When people are ready to move into independent living, they are offered a short-term resettlement service which will help them establish their new home and connect into the community.

5.4 Referrals to housing related support are made through the Manchester Access and Support Gateway, an on-line referral and matching system. A range of agencies have access to this system, including Probation, Ingeus (who are commissioned and funded by the probation service to provide support with employment, access to housing, benefits, drugs and alcohol services, mental health services and signpost to charities etc), and On The Out.

5.5 Housing related support can be a good move-on option for people needing to leave CAS-3 accommodation who have longer term support needs and are not yet ready for their own tenancy.

## **6.0 Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 (CAS3) accommodation**

6.1 The Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 (CAS-3), funded by the Ministry of Justice, provides temporary accommodation to homeless prison leavers and those moving on from Approved Premises. CAS-3 is available specifically for people being released from prison who are likely to be without accommodation and where there is no statutory homeless duty owed to them.

6.2 Accommodation is provided for up to 84 days during which time people are provided with assistance and support to help them find and move into more settled accommodation. The aim is to support people to resettle and reintegrate longer term: every person will have a clear move on plan and the support process is framed around securing an appropriate onward referral and preparing people for the next step. This is not limited to accommodation and considers all of the resources that people need to thrive.

6.3 The support provider for CAS-3 in Manchester is a voluntary sector organisation called On The Out. On The Out work closely with Probation and the Homeless services, and provide both practical and emotional support, such as sorting out ID, opening bank accounts, helping to claim benefits, access employment and training opportunities, and linking people to specialist health services such as substance misuse.

6.4 There are currently 54 units of CAS-3 accommodation across Manchester, including a small number of units designated for women. The accommodation is of a good standard and is equipped with everything that people need to live independently for a short period. People going into CAS-3 accommodation

sign a compact agreement which set out a range of expectations, including the need to engage with the support being provided.

6.5 CAS-3 is currently funded until 2025 and it is hoped that continuation funding will be secured beyond this.

6.6 As well as supporting people in CAS-3 accommodation, On The Out support prison leavers to access and sustain placements within a range of other accommodation settings, linking them into appropriate support. This includes providing practical support to vulnerable people released from prison “at the gate”, escorting them to approved premises and maximising engagement and connection with probation and other agencies.

## **7.0 Accommodation for ex-offenders - Tenancy Compliance Team**

7.1 The Accommodation for ex-Offenders (AfEO) programme aims to reduce reoffending and homelessness by supporting ex-offenders who might otherwise become homeless or sleep rough to access the private rented sector. The eligibility criteria is: Adults with a history of offending of all genders who are aged eighteen or above who are:

- Assessed as ready to take on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy.
- Homeless or at a risk of homelessness/rough sleeping, and fall within one of the following groups:
  - Moving on as homeless from Community Accommodation Service;
  - Moving on as homeless from Approved Premises accommodation;
  - Moving on as homeless from Bail Accommodation Support Service;
  - Rough sleeping and served a custodial sentence within the last 12 months;
  - Staying in a hostel, night shelter or B&B, and served a custodial sentence within the last 12 months;
  - Staying temporarily with friends or family (sofa surfing) and served a custodial sentence within the last 12 months.

7.2 Since September 2021, when the programme commenced, in excess of 500 referrals have been received for private rented sector accommodation and support under this scheme.

7.3 An individual is only eligible for this scheme if they are found to be ‘No Priority Need’ following a homeless assessment. Without this funding these clients would be street homeless and there would be a greater chance of reoffending given lack of stable accommodation.

7.4 The tenancy compliance service, which is situated within the homeless service, manages the intensive support to the individuals, working in partnership with the probation service. Referrals to the Tenancy Compliance Service come through two main channels. These are the Community Accommodation Service (CAS-3) and direct from Greater Manchester Probation Service.

- 7.5 The individual made aware they are eligible for support however acceptance of support from the individual is voluntary. The majority of people accept support as part of their resettlement into the community to enable them to sustain their tenancies.
- 7.6 The accommodation is predominantly in a shared house where some facilities are shared (usually kitchen and/or a bathroom in some cases). A twelve-month Assured Shorthold Tenancy is always offered.
- 7.7 Once an individual has signed the tenancy agreement and all risk information is received, a compliance officer is allocated to offer support. The individuals are visited at least once a week and are supported with accessing work, rehabilitation / training courses, setting up payment plans etc. This contributes to reducing the risk of reoffending through improving lifestyle choices and helping resolve issues, assisting the individual to be a good citizen in the community and sustain a tenancy. The team also offer after hours visits for those who are working full time to ensure they are given the best chance of success.
- 7.8 There have been a number of success stories where individuals have maintained their tenancies so well that the tenancies have been extended by the landlord. There have also been cases where the individual has procured employment and been able to source a more stable home in an area of their own choice. The success of the programme is through multi-agency working, wrapping the support around and tailored to the individual. This involves working alongside the Probation Service and Police daily and meeting regularly with Mental Health Services, Adult Services, drug and alcohol teams and all other partner agencies where required.

#### Case Study

Mr A has been supported by TCSS since 16/01/2024. Mr A has engaged with the service positively with the service from the onset. In the initial stages of the tenancy Mr A was assisted with claiming benefits which ensured that his housing costs were being paid direct to the landlord and that he was receiving the benefits that he was entitled to. Mr A has been helped sourcing and accessing training through back on track and the booth centre to enhance his opportunities of future employment.

Contact with the probation officer and partner agencies ensure Mr A is complying with his licence conditions and will remain throughout the support period. Regular contact with the landlord ensures that there are no issues with the conduct of his tenancy i.e. being a good tenant and complying with all aspects of his tenancy agreement.

Mr A was keen to move on from a shared environment into his own self-contained accommodation. He was provided with details of all housing options available to him, such as Right Move and Open Rent which offer accommodation to suit his needs. He also registered with Manchester Move



and was subsequently processed through the Serious offender Panel which was approved. His application is now live and eligible for bids.

Mr A has recently sourced his own private rented property via Right Move which he expects to move in to in the next week or so. Mr A continue to be supported by TCSS through the transition from AFEO accommodation to his own independent property.

After a short period of resettlement his case will be successfully closed.

## **8.0 Care Leavers and Young People**

- 8.1 The Leaving Care service facilitate and support with 'Care Leaver Forums' with care experienced young people who are in custody to support resettlement via pathway planning before their release.
- 8.2 The service are supporting local institutions to review the policies and procedures in relation to supporting care experienced young people whilst they are in custody to ensure their needs and experiences are understood by all staff responsible for them.
- 8.3 There are regular multi disciplinary meetings that take place in the six months prior to release from custody to support resettlement and ensure the right services are involved at the right time to ensure a return to the community is successful. There is a clear policy for resettlement for care leavers to the community with well established escalation process where there are concerns.
- 8.4 The main challenge for care experienced young people resettling in the community is availability of suitable accommodation however a large proportion of this cohort return home to family members.

## **9.0 Recommendations**

- 9.1 To consider and comment on the information in the report.