

SCOTTISH QUALITY STANDARDS HOUSING ADVICE, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE IN AND LEAVING PRISON

**Sustainable
Housing
On
Release for
Everyone**



Revised 2024

Scottish Quality Standards – Housing Advice, Information and Support for People on Remand or Serving a Short Term Sentence

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Foreword

The Scottish Government has a clear vision of how a progressive and co-ordinated justice system can contribute to the development of a just, equitable and inclusive society. By establishing a system that holds individuals to account for their offending, and which supports them to rehabilitate, improve their life chances, and make positive contributions to our communities, we want to reduce offending and have safer communities.

Many people who are in contact with the justice system require support to move forward, from a range of organisations, so we need to ensure the right services are provided at the right time and meet the right needs. Therefore, ensuring support is available to enable people to successfully resettle in their communities does not sit solely within the justice sector, and responsibility must be shared across public services, local authorities, the third sector, employers, and society.

We know that access to suitable sustainable housing is critical in supporting a safe, well managed return to the community and to reduce reoffending. That is why our Vision for Justice, published in 2022, includes a clear aim to ensure those who have offended have access to housing which meets their needs.

It is why we believe that these SHORE standards, which were first introduced in 2017, are so important. They set a clear pathway to sustainable housing for people leaving prison starting from the very first night in custody and continuing throughout the individual's journey until their release. They increase the individual's chances of reintegrating back into their community successfully, not just through meeting their housing needs, but also by improving access to other public services and supporting desistance.

This refresh of the standards reflects changes which have taken place across the legislative and policy landscape and includes an action plan which clearly sets out areas for future strategic development.

I commend the Scottish Prison Service, local authorities and third sector partners for their tireless work in addressing the housing needs of individuals in custody and encourage the continued efforts of all to further develop and cement the standards in every day practice.



Angela Constance, MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home
Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Constance'.

Paul McLennan, MSP Minister for Housing

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul McLennan'.

1 About this Document

- 1.1 This document has been written for use by SPS staff, private prisons, local authority Housing, Homelessness and Social Work staff (and other teams who support the justice system), Registered Social Landlords, Police Scotland, Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service, Health services, third sector advice and support agencies, and service users themselves.
- 1.2 The Scottish Quality Standards for Housing Advice, Information and Support for people in custody or the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) Standards were originally developed collaboratively in 2017 and can be found [here](#) .
- 1.3 They were developed to ensure that everyone has access to sustainable housing on release. In turn this will contribute towards the prevention of homelessness and reoffending. The standards and outcomes detailed in this document describe the processes and results which service users expect community justice partners to achieve.
- 1.4 The standards are now part of the homeless system rhetoric in Scotland and while not fully embedded across the country, they are a common aspirational goal for Community Justice Partners and organisations.
- 1.5 The Coronavirus pandemic which hit Scotland in March 2020 meant that Community Justice Partners had to make changes to the way they worked at rapid pace. SPS and the Scottish Government responded by drafting [interim guidance for prison and housing staff](#).
- 1.6 This required increased data sharing, close collaborative working, coordination, person centred approaches, good communication and new ways of working such as increased use of 'Email a Prisoner' and Teams calls.
- 1.7 This revision of SHORE encompasses lessons learned during the pandemic and where this has not been possible, sets out plans for their inclusion at a later date. It has been written collaboratively, with the oversight of the Strategic Oversight Group which was set up in late 2023, with representation from Scottish Government, SPS, COSLA, ALACHO, SOLACE, local authorities and third sector organisations.

2 Common Purpose and Value

Purpose

Why do we need standards?

- 2.1 These standards have been published to ensure that the housing needs of individuals in prison are handled at an early stage, in a consistent way across Scotland, regardless of where they come from, their housing status and how long they have been in prison or young offenders' institution. The standards are designed to ensure that people leaving prison can access services and accommodation in the same way as people living in the community. Partners are committed to ensuring that people are treated fairly, with dignity, and with respect for their human rights in line with the Scottish Human Rights Commission PANEL principles detailed below: this is regardless of their sex; gender identity; marital and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity; race (including ethnic or national origin, nationality or colour); disability; sexual orientation; age; religion or belief; and regardless of any other personal characteristic, such as: social background, working pattern, trade union activity or political opinion.

Participation

- People should be involved in decisions that affect their rights.

Accountability

- There should be monitoring of how people's rights are being affected, as well as remedies when things go wrong.

Non-Discrimination and Equality

- All forms of discrimination must be prohibited, prevented and eliminated. People who face the biggest barriers to realising their rights should be prioritised.

Empowerment

- Everyone should understand their rights and be fully supported to take part in developing policy and practices which affect their lives.

Legality

- Approaches should be grounded in the legal rights that are set out in domestic and international laws.

- 2.2 Our common purpose is that **everyone should have suitable (see section 6) accommodation to go to on the day they are released from custody with appropriate supports in place to enable them to sustain their accommodation.** This is consistent with Scottish Government's Ending Homelessness Together ambition that everyone has a safe, warm and affordable home that meets their needs, and our vision that Scotland is a safer, fairer and more inclusive nation where we: -

- Prevent and reduce further offending by addressing its underlying causes; and

- Safely and effectively manage and support those who have committed offences to help them reintegrate, or in some cases integrate for the first time, into the community and realise their potential which in turn will create a safer and fairer society for all.
- 2.3 Housing, housing support and specialist support (including health and social care) are central to this vision, not only for the benefit of the individual but also for the wider community.
- 2.4 We recognise that stable accommodation reduces the likelihood of re-offending, maintains health and wellbeing thus making the community a safer place for everyone. Loss of accommodation and homelessness therefore are key concerns for partners. However, there are many other related issues which add to the complexities faced by people in and leaving prison. These include but are not limited to loss of possessions (including personal documents), accrual of rent arrears and other debts, lack of a bank account for receipt of welfare benefits, lack of technology or digital knowledge to communicate with key services and lack of skills to manage to sustain a tenancy. Failure to consider an individual's housing needs in a planned way at every stage of their involvement with the justice system – on arrest, at court, on entering prison, during their sentence, prior to release and post liberation can result in people not only losing their existing accommodation, but poses a risk to the stability of their life as a whole.
- 2.5 There is also evidence that accommodation is a particular issue for women. In 2019, 40% of women who completed the Prisoner Survey reported that they did not know where they would be living when they were released compared to 37% of males and 28% of young people. Of the women responding to the survey, 61% had been a victim of violence from their spouse or partner compared to 29% of men and 21% of young people. The particular housing needs of women will be considered as an action for future strategic development.

Values

- 2.6 In order to achieve our common goal of sustainable (see section 6) housing for everyone on release, it is important that partners sign up to the following values:
- Services believe that people can change;
 - Individuals have their needs recognised timeously, are treated fairly with kindness, dignity and respect (their voices are heard);
 - Services provide fair access to housing and housing services;
 - Services strive to have a positive attitude and challenge others whose language may reinforce stigma and negative attitude towards people with an offending history;
 - Social justice (see section 6) applies to everyone and people are given the opportunity to make the most of their lives including accessing suitable housing; and
 - Services recognise and provide support for vulnerabilities of different kinds, such as mental health problems, youth and infirmity.
- 2.7 These values mean that services should work towards the following principles:
- A person centred approach, focussed on seamless comprehensive joint planning, where necessary, for the individual's release, taking account of needs and vulnerabilities. This will involve effective partnership working with all services that need to be involved (including health, social care, other public and voluntary (including peer support)) to maximise a person's opportunity of accessing and sustaining suitable accommodation on release;

- Raise awareness of operating in line with psychologically informed principles. Staff operating informed by trauma-informed principles (see section 6) will use evidence from psychological disciplines to understand where ‘challenging behaviour’ comes from and be able to work more creatively and constructively with people who experience deep social exclusion. Staff will have a developed understanding of how their own relationship with service users and the physical environment that service users experience are likely to influence behaviour and engagement;
- A human rights based approach bearing in mind the PANEL principles on page 6;
- Services care about people and believe that positive relationships are a critical enabler of change;
- Strive for continuous improvement in policies, processes and systems;
- Efficient services (including timely, proportionate and effectively evidenced value for money, avoiding duplication, shared approaches to shared problems, and best use of available resources);
- Provide stable settled housing from the start (tenure neutral) – where this is what the individual wants and ensure wrap around support where required to sustain this;
- Open, transparent, consistent and accountable services for people in and leaving prison;
- Share information appropriately in line with the requirements of data protection legislation; and
- Stickability – persevering when the individual chooses to disengage.

3 Quality Standards

- 3.1 The standards represent the four stages of an individual's journey and are linked to shared and respective roles and responsibilities at each stage of that journey:
- On Imprisonment (including on remand);
 - During time in custody;
 - Prior to release; and
 - Following Release.
- 3.2 This document currently focuses on the sections of the journey from entering prison to following liberation but at a future point it is planned to include sections relating to On Arrest and At Court.
- 3.3 People who are subject to the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) (updated in [March 2022](#)) will be supported through the current multi-agency arrangements within each local authority.
- 3.4 A complete checklist is provided in Annex F which details responsibilities and timescales. Additionally, checklists are provided in each chapter relating to an individual standard.

Monitoring and Review

- 3.5 SHORE is included at all inductions for Heads of Offender Outcomes.
- 3.6 Performance management indicators are being developed (see SHORE action plan) which will allow each local authority to monitor cases and homelessness prevention.
- 3.7 Initially existing data collections round HL1, HL3 and Prevent 1 (See Notes about language pages 33 and 34) will be used to inform progress but this will be kept under review.

Resolution of Disputes

- 3.8 If circumstances arise in which one partner has concerns in relation to the standards, every effort should be made to resolve this so that delivery of service provision is not disrupted. This should be addressed at Partnership/Policy Manager Level.
- 3.9 Any serious concerns should be escalated to a Senior Manager level.

Joint Responsibilities

- 3.10 The SPS maintains a record of up to date generic secure contact details for Links Centres. Each organisation will share these details to ensure that easy contact can be made to avoid delays and address issues at the outset. Contact details can also be found on page 30 of this document.
- 3.11 Partners should adhere to the agreed Data Sharing Agreement with SPS when sharing information.
- 3.12 To improve access to housing, community justice partners and the third sector should develop multi-agency protocols with local housing providers and third sector organisations

in order to ensure the needs of those who have committed offences are identified and addressed and to ensure consistent access to suitable accommodation at all stages of the criminal justice process¹. These protocols will describe the local processes between statutory and third sector community justice partners and prisons, include the National Outcome “more people have access to suitable accommodation following release from a prison sentence” and will complement the national standards. The Community Justice Performance Framework is supported by the [Community Justice Improvement Tool](#), published by Community Justice Scotland in March 2023.

Good practice examples in relation to data sharing and protocols are detailed below.

Angus Council Prison Protocol

Angus Council has operated a prison housing protocol since 2010. The protocol was revised and strengthened in 2020, in line with SHORE standards and rapid rehousing guidelines. The focus is on partnership working to prevent homelessness on entry to prison, and to prevent homelessness on release. The Council has an information-sharing agreement in place with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and receives weekly reports on prison admissions and upcoming liberations. A central team of housing staff identify and cross-check housing and related issues, liaise with landlords, benefit agencies and any relevant support providers to prevent housing loss across all tenures - including Council, Housing Association and private rented sector (PRS) tenants, linking in with private rented landlords as required. In 2020, the Common Allocations Policy was revised to award the highest priority to applicants in institutions, including prisons, to whom the Council has rehousing duty. Housing staff aim to assess the housing needs of those in prison early, avoiding a homelessness application and temporary accommodation, by securing a home in time for release. Individuals are supported with furniture, utilities and benefits claims, where needed, through housing support and justice services.

There has been a substantial reduction in homelessness applications from people previously in prison since introducing the protocol. Since 2020, there has been a 30% reduction in people applying as homeless directly from prison highlighting the success of the protocol and work to prevent homelessness on release.

¹ [Community Justice Performance Framework - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Protocol in practice

Bob was serving 6-months of a 12-month sentence for offences under MAPPA.

Dumfries and Galloway Housing Options and Homelessness Service (HOHS) attended a pre-release meeting with HMP Dumfries to discuss Bob's housing situation upon liberation. A homeless application was taken October 2019 and Bob was liberated from HMP Dumfries in December 2019.

Bob previously had his own tenancy with Loreburn Housing Association in Dumfries, but it was deemed unsafe for him to return there.

The HOHS progressed Bob's case via the Prison Discharge Protocol, whereby they would look to source permanent accommodation for him to move directly into upon liberation. This would prevent Bob from having to be progressed through the Homeless route and be accommodated in temporary furnished accommodation.

Liaising with partners Loreburn Housing Association (LHA) it was agreed that they would source alternative permanent accommodation for Bob upon his release from prison.

Once this accommodation was sourced and deemed safe this was then progressed working in partnership with HMP Dumfries and Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service (DAGCAS).

The process followed was:

- HOHS liaising with Bob's family, LHA, DAGCAS, Removal Company and HMP Dumfries
- DAGCAS liaising with LHA in relation to ending his current tenancy with LHA and liaising with DWP and LHA in relation to new tenancy and rent/rent arrears
- HMP Dumfries, facilitating visits from LHA Housing Officer to discuss the new tenancy with Bob and this would allow LHA to ensure the tenancy was ready for him on release
- HMP Dumfries facilitating a visit from LHA Housing Officer so new tenancy agreement could be signed whilst Bob was still in prison
- Communication across all partners in relation to the Prison Discharge Protocol

Bob was liberated from HMP Dumfries December 2019, arrangements were made with the HOHS and his family to collect him from prison and take him directly to his new home.

As of March 2024, Bob remains in his tenancy with LHA and there has been no further re-offending that resulted in re-admission to prison.

4 What are the Standards

- 4.1 There are four standards which seek to provide the best possible housing outcomes for individuals throughout their justice journey.

Standard 1: On Imprisonment

Individuals are supported to **sustain existing accommodation and possessions or end tenancies appropriately**, securing furniture and belongings where this is the best option. Their housing needs are identified and support plans put in place, for the duration of the sentence, for those that require suitable housing on release.

Standard 2: During sentence

Individuals feel that **services are focussed on meeting their needs** and their expectations are managed in preparation (dependent on sentence length) for their release. Individuals are **clear about their own roles and responsibilities** in the process as well as those of the services supporting them.

Standard 3: Prior to Release

Appropriate housing and support is available on release. Individuals feel confident, optimistic and motivated about returning to the community with a positive destination.

Standard 4: Following Release

Individuals are supported to sustain their accommodation and work towards their housing aspirations, contributing towards reducing reoffending.

Standard 1: On Imprisonment

Individuals are supported to **sustain existing accommodation and possessions or end tenancies appropriately**, securing furniture and belongings where this is the best option. Their housing needs are identified and support plans put in place, for the duration of the sentence, for those that require suitable housing on release.

Individual cases are managed so that:

- Initial housing, health, welfare and employment needs are addressed by prison staff on entry to prison with the appropriate organisation (may include the individual's landlord and Local Authority) e.g. securing property, utilities/services management, pets, family needs (i.e. where the person in prison is the main tenancy holder, primary carer) and personal documents;
- Every individual has their housing, health and welfare situation (including housing benefit) along with associated support needs assessed by prison staff within 72 hours of entry to prison and on transfer to another establishment. It is recognised that not all individuals will be ready at this stage;
- Within 14 days SPS makes contact with the relevant local authority to agree prevention options and/or ascertain current position in the housing/homeless system. Agreement reached on how the case needs to be handled and by whom;
- A Housing Options approach should be taken at the earliest opportunity and housing options officers should engage with private landlords to negotiate options to retain private tenancies and mortgage lenders in respect of owner occupiers. Development of the individual pathway starts here facilitating ownership by individuals; and
- Complete a housing application and medical form where appropriate.

Checklist for Partners: Standard 1²- On Imprisonment

Activity	When	Who	Completed?
For all individuals, including those on remand, identify immediate housing issues and contact landlord.	First Night (if unable to take part in the interview, review within 24/48/72 hours)	SPS	
Complete full screening tool, identifying any housing and welfare issues, critical health and social care needs, employment issues and make referral to landlord/ appropriate local authority/ prison work coach/health professional/ third sector organisations.	72 hours	SPS	
Discuss consent to share information with all individuals, the type of information to be shared and with whom and the likely consequences, making an appropriate entry on the prison record system.	72 hours	SPS	
Encourage individuals to attend induction /engage with services	72 hours	SPS	
Assist the individual to complete a change of circumstances form to ensure Housing Benefit is paid where appropriate (e.g. over working age, living in temporary or sheltered accommodation) or refer to the Prison Work Coach if the individual is eligible for the housing element of Universal Credit See page 47	72 hours	Local authorities / SPS / Partner agencies	
Check whether the sentence is longer than the stipulated housing benefit / universal credit payment period, then make arrangements, in order to help the individual to avoid getting into debt and allowing them to move back into their existing accommodation / end the tenancy appropriately. Independent Advocacy should be considered in these cases	72 hours	Housing / landlord / SPS	
Promote Third and Voluntary Sector or LA throughcare services at induction and make appropriate referrals	72 hours	SPS / Housing	
Encourage and assist individuals to contact their landlord to advise them of their situation	72 hours	SPS / Housing	
Encourage and assist individuals who own their own home to contact their mortgage lender to discuss options.	72 hours	SPS / Housing	
Where an individual has been living with family and friends and the relationship has broken down refer to a Family Contact Officers (FCOs), Personal Officer or family mediation services (if consistent with welfare).	72 hours	SPS / Housing	
Respond to referral	Within 5 working days	Local authority Housing Contact to the Generic email address	

² The complete checklist for partners Standards 1 – 4 can be found at Annex b

		provided for Links Centre	
Ascertain current position in the housing/homeless system and jointly agree prevention options, how the case should be handled and by whom.	14 days	Housing and SPS	
Adopt a Housing Options approach.	As early as possible	Housing	
Support individuals to make mainstream housing applications, if appropriate, at the earliest opportunity, using the housing providers preferred method e.g. paper application, online application, downloadable form and ensure individual has all the necessary documentation. Action to replace or retrieve documents if not.	As early as possible	SPS	
Update Community Integration Plan domains on PR2 at each intervention	Immediately	SPS / Housing where based in an establishment	

Standard 1: Good Practice Examples

Lewis

Lewis has a long history of homelessness and had been in and out of prison over several years. Nine months after securing his first permanent council tenancy, he received an 8 month custodial sentence.

A housing options interview was carried out with Lewis 6 days after he was admitted into SPS custody and following this he met with a housing officer from his local authority who attended HMP Low Moss on a weekly basis.

During the course of the Housing Options interview, Lewis advised that prior to being admitted to prison, he was in receipt of Housing Benefits, Employment Support Allowance and Adult Disability Payment. The housing officer discussed the rules for people in prison and receipt of Housing Benefit with Lewis – because his sentence was longer than 13 weeks, he would not be entitled to Housing Benefit and as a result, rent arrears would accrue. This would mean there was a risk of being taken to court for eviction due to rent arrears. Lewis was adamant he did not want to lose his tenancy as it had taken him 17 years to get a place of his own.

The housing officer contacted Lewis' local housing officer to advise of Lewis' custodial sentence. The local housing officer advised Lewis could either terminate his property and present as homeless on liberation, or have a family member pay rent on his behalf. Lewis had no one to pay his rent for him and was unwilling to terminate his tenancy. He also could not think of anyone to sublet from him, so this was not an option.

The housing officer liaised with the Job Centre Adviser in HMP Low Moss to enquire about Lewis' last payments of benefits, which revealed he had received a payment of Employment Support Allowance on the day of his arrest. The housing officer then contacted Social Security Scotland to enquire about the status of Adult Disability Payment due to Lewis. It was confirmed that a payment was being issued that day and would be in Lewis' bank account in 2 days' time.

Although the amount Lewis had access to would not be the full amount to cover rent while he was in custody, the housing officer asked Lewis whether he would be willing to use these 2 benefit payments towards rent payments. Lewis agreed, providing he was assured his tenancy would be safe and there was no risk of eviction.

The housing officer contacted the local authority's debt manager, who agreed that if Lewis made an advance lump sum payment on his rent, court action for eviction could be stopped. Lewis could then make up the shortfall on his release by setting up a payment plan. The housing officer supported Lewis to make arrangements with his bank for a payment to be sent to his rent account at his local authority via a bank transfer. The housing officer also completed a person in detention council tax exemption form to stop council tax arrears accruing.

Lewis remains in his council tenancy and has not returned to SPS custody. The early meeting with Lewis on admission for a housing options interview, and the local authority willingness to accept part payment of rent followed by a payment plan on release prevented Lewis from losing his tenancy and returning to his previous cycle of homelessness and prison sentences.

Paul

Paul was on remand in HMP Perth for a period of 6 to 12 months. Paul had been supported by the Complex Needs Coordinator prior to the period of remand and had history of drug addiction and health needs. Work had commenced prior to Paul's remand to identify suitable supports for him however support was not available at the level of intensity that he required.

During Paul's period of remand, a new intensive support service became available within Perth and Kinross. The Complex Needs Coordinator subsequently met with Paul to discuss the service and he consented to a referral. The referral was accepted and engagement commenced with Paul during his period on remand via weekly visits and was supported by the Complex Needs Coordinator.

Paul was released following a virtual court appearance. The support service was aware that Paul was attending court and maintained contact with HMP Perth regarding the court outcome. As soon as the court outcome was known, the support service arranged temporary accommodation, accessed a starter pack (consisting of a toaster, microwave, kettle, pots, plates, cutlery, towels, curtains and bedding), a food parcel and appropriate clothing for him on release. Paul's support worker was able to meet him at the gate, despite the release time being 7 pm, and supported Paul to the property. Paul spent a short period of time (4 weeks) in temporary accommodation before he moved to a sustainable tenancy.

An issue identified as a direct result of supporting Paul's release was the lack of access to prescribed medications, other than opiate replacement medications. Enquiries were made with Prison Based Healthcare and Pharmacy who confirmed the issue is nationally recognised. Current advice is to contact the GP at the earliest opportunity. Paul's support worker contacted NHS24 and supported Paul to access his full prescription but there was a delay in accessing.

Remand & Complex Needs Co-ordination

During 2023-24 the Perth and Kinross Community Justice and Safety Partnership embarked on a Remand test of change with Perth and Kinross residents held in HMP Perth. The purpose of the test of change was to engage with the remand population, share information regarding supports available and, where possible, link residents in with appropriate supports ahead of release. During the reporting period support was offered via drop-in sessions with the Complex Needs Co-ordinator. Fifty-one people engaged with the Complex Needs Co-ordinator during that time and support was provided to all, at varying intensity depending on the support requested. Out of the 51 people who attended, 10 attended on several occasions. Nine of the 10 regular attenders have since contacted the Complex Needs Co-ordinator on release and support has been provided in the community.

Work will continue during 2024-25 to further develop the Remand offer which is targeted at Perth and Kinross residents.

Standard 2: During Sentence

Individuals feel that **services are focussed on meeting their needs** and their expectations are managed in preparation (dependent on sentence length) for their release. Individuals are **clear about their own roles and responsibilities** in the process as well as those of the services supporting them.

Individual cases are managed so that:

- Partners work collaboratively (facilitated by SPS) with individuals on an ongoing basis (from 5 days after entry to custody to 12 weeks prior to release), proactively inquiring about housing circumstances, to plan for sustainable accommodation and to provide ongoing support as part of the case management approach – one prisoner / one pathway. Families should be involved where possible.
- A lead support worker (Personal Officer) is identified in prison and in the community (area where the person is seeking accommodation) and the plan is shared with the consent of the individual.
- A housing options approach is taken at the earlier stage to meet the individual's housing needs on release. This will include decisions about what type of application is completed and when, and the referrals which are required.
- Arrangements are put in place to enable individuals to make payments towards any existing rent account.
- Throughcare services are promoted to individuals, their families and their wider network.
- The opportunity is created and encouraged for individuals to develop independent living skills to help them maintain tenancies.

NB: For some individuals, the pathway will be straightforward – for others, there will need to be a multi-agency case management approach including securing assessment and access to mental health, addiction and occupational therapy services.

Checklist for Partners: Standard 2 – During Sentence

Activity	When	Who	Completed?
Partners work collaboratively with individuals to plan for sustainable accommodation and support as part of a case management approach.	5 working days to 12 weeks prior to release	SPS / Housing / SW, NHS and partners	
Undertake a housing options approach to meeting the individual's housing needs.	5 working days to 12 weeks prior to release	Housing	
For individuals with a current tenancy: Social landlords consider such possibilities as allowing them to sublet their house during their sentence, negotiating and organising for someone else to occupy the property for the period that the individual is in prison or assisting them to terminate their tenancy and provide suitable accommodation on release.	5 working days to 12 weeks prior to release	Housing	
Facilitate advice and planning regarding finance, benefit and debt. Consider whether interventions such as arrears repayment scheme are necessary.	5 working days to 12 weeks prior to release	SPS	
Promote throughcare services to individuals and their families.	5 working days to 12 weeks prior to release	SPS	
Identify relevant programmes for the individual to complete during their sentence (e.g. health care, substance recovery, employment, citizenship, life skills and tenancy management).	5 working days to 12 weeks prior to release	SPS	
Update Community Integration Plan domains on PR2 at each intervention	Immediately	SPS / Housing / other community partners where based in an establishment	

Standard 2: Good Practice Examples

Gary

Gary, who was in custody in HMP Barlinnie, was sentenced in November 2023. Gary had a council tenancy and prior to being sentenced, received Universal Credit Housing Costs to cover the rent charge. Once sentenced, the Universal Credit Housing Costs stopped and rent arrears began to increase. Not wishing to lose the tenancy, and unable to pay the ongoing rent, Gary requested that a family member sublet the property while he was in prison, to cover the ongoing rent charge. Permission was granted by the council, and the family member moved into the property and is covering the rent charge. When Gary is liberated from prison, the family member will move out and source alternative accommodation.

Colin

Colin was resident in privately rented property prior to custody. Although their landlord had been made aware of the circumstances and was supportive of their return, once their Housing Benefit ceased and arrears began to accrue, the landlord notified the local authority they would need to begin to take steps to recover the tenancy. Contact was made with Colin to discuss his Housing Options. He expressed extreme distress at the thought of not having his tenancy on release as it had been his home for a considerable period of time, but he would be unable to cover the full rental amount for the remainder of their sentence. Discussion was held with partners and it was decided that the existing tenancy was the most appropriate option for release due to its suitability from a risk assessment perspective and in terms of Colin's wellbeing. Arrangements were then made with the landlord to cease eviction proceedings on the proviso the local authority would fund the shortfall in the rent for the remainder of the sentence from their Homelessness Prevention fund. Colin was then able to return to his home on release and access the community supports he already had in place.

Standard 3: Prior to Release

Appropriate housing and support is available for the individual's release. Individuals feel confident, optimistic and motivated about returning to the community with a positive destination.

Partners work together so that:

- As part of the individual's pathway, arrangements will be made to ensure appropriate accommodation, in keeping with the plan provided on release
- Where someone needs to make a homeless application, this is made no later than 8 weeks prior to the earliest release date and accommodation; associated community support arrangements are put in place 24-48 hours prior to liberation and communicated to the individual at this time
- Arrangements are put in place for GP registration and first appointment where required
- Advance benefit and welfare fund applications are made where possible. For Scottish Welfare Fund applications, decisions in principle should be considered where possible to allow applicants to plan ahead
- SPS, social landlords, throughcare and mentoring services and other partners liaise with each other to ensure the journey back into the community is as seamless as possible through a single plan which includes accessing accommodation and support.

Checklist for Partners: Standard 3 – Prior to Release

Activity	When	Who	Completed?
SPS staff in conjunction with partners review the individual's community integration plan throughout sentence to ensure appropriate accommodation is available on release.	Final reviews 6-8 weeks and 7 days prior to release	SPS and all partners involved in the plan	
If homeless make contact with the appropriate Homelessness team to ensure Homelessness applications are completed in advance.	8 weeks prior to release	SPS /Housing	
Individuals supported to complete and submit Scottish Welfare Fund application where required.	8 weeks prior to release	SPS / Housing / other community partners	
Accommodation and support arrangements put in place.	24 – 48 hours prior to release	Housing, community partners	
Relevant partners liaise with each other right up to release to ensure reintegration is as seamless as possible and agree on a lead officer.	Ongoing	SPS, Housing, Throughcare services, JCP, Health (including prison and community based mental health, substance use or recovery services), Social Work, Education, PSP, Mentors Third Sector, Family, NHS	
Update Community Integration Plan domains on PR2 at each intervention	Immediately	SPS / Housing / Other community partners where based in an establishment	

Standard 3: Good Practice Examples

Davie

Davie (29yrs old) was a prolific offender and the longest that he had managed in the community between 2015 and 2022 was 7 weeks. He was being supported via Housing First since 2019 but his chaotic lifestyle and substance use made it impossible to sustain accommodation. The revolving door of prison and short stays in the community combined with both substance use and mental health issues were a huge concern to those trying to support him.

In September 2021, a homeless application was made and temporary accommodation provided. Davie was remanded in HMP Grampian in November 2021 and the temporary accommodation was terminated.

Davie was released at the end of April 2022 with temporary accommodation provided but then remanded again in June 2022 and released shortly after. In July 2022 he was further remanded and at the beginning of August 2022 he was given an 8-month sentence with EDL early December 2022.

Housing First initiated a multi-agency meeting with all services to plan for his release. Working with the newly formed prison outreach team at HMP Grampian, a prison to rehab placement was identified. All those involved planned the move from prison direct to rehab and also identified a backup of temporary accommodation if the rehab placement broke down in its early days.

During the rehab placement Davie continued to work with Housing First, the prison service, substance misuse colleagues and staff at the placement.

He completed the rehab placement with an extended stay funded by Aberdeenshire H&SC and decided not to return to Aberdeenshire. He was made an offer of accommodation by another Scottish Local Authority that he felt was unsuitable and he was assisted by ongoing supports within Aberdeenshire to request a review of the offer. As of February 2024, he has a permanent tenancy and has not had any further periods in prison.

Voluntary Throughcare Co-ordination

During 2023-24 the Community Justice and Safety Partnership initiated a Voluntary Throughcare Co-ordination meeting as part of a Voluntary Throughcare (opt out as opposed to opt in) test of change. The weekly meeting was attended by the Community Justice Co-ordinator, Complex Needs Co-ordinator, Justice Social Work, Apex (New Routes) and Churches Action for the Homeless (April to September 2023) during the reporting period and concentrated on releases from HMP Perth and HMP Glenochil.

The Voluntary Throughcare Co-ordination meeting considers the support needs of short-term prison residents (sentence of under 4 years and not subject to statutory supervision) due for release within the following 3 months. The meeting seeks to ensure that the local community support service, that is best placed to provide support, is the service which makes this offer. In addition, the meeting also considers the person's accommodation needs and GP registration. Most releases have been supported by Apex (New Routes), but where appropriate, the voluntary throughcare offer was provided by Justice Social Work (i.e. where a difficult to engage person already has a relationship with a worker) or Intensive Housing Support (where a person is known to have more complex needs requiring a higher level and intensity of support).

Andrew

Andrew, in his 60's, was serving a short-term sentence in HMP Perth. Andrew had a history of offending and had been in and out of prison throughout his life (generally short-term sentences).

Andrew agreed to the offer of voluntary throughcare from a Justice Social Work Assistant (support was offered by Justice Social work as Andrew was well known to the service).

It was identified that Andrew would be homeless on release, and he was referred to the Sustainable Tenancy test of change as part of the pre-release planning activity. A property was identified for Andrew, and he subsequently accepted the offer. In addition to arranging the tenancy, the Housing Team also worked behind the scenes to source furnishings for the property so that it was ready to move into prior to release.

Andrew had fond childhood memories of the area where the property was offered and was pleased to be moving to a street where he felt he had a connection.

Andrew's worker engaged with him prior to release and spent the entire day with him on the day of his release. Andrew was supported with a range of tasks including setting up a bank account, registering with a GP practice close to his new address, accessing a Welfare Rights benefits check and applying for eligible benefits etc.

Andrew engaged well with his worker in the community and sustained the tenancy for 6 months, prior to passing away from natural causes.

Sustainable Tenancy

During 2023-24 Perth and Kinross Community Justice and Safety Partnership, embarked on a Sustainable Tenancy test of change led by the Housing Options Team. Over this period six people moved directly from prison to a furnished, social housing tenancy. The purpose of the test of change was to explore possibilities for people, with no fixed abode, to be released direct to a sustainable tenancy and to identify solutions for any barriers identified. Work will take place during 2024-25 to embed a consistent sustainable tenancy offer for those leaving prison with no fixed abode.

Sheila

Sheila (40yrs old) was remanded in HMP Grampian in May 2021 and then fully committed. Prior to entering prison, she had been sofa surfing.

The SPS report detailing scheduled liberations over the next 12 weeks is discussed at a four weekly Throughcare meeting where Housing, Justice Social Work, NHS and Turning Point are represented. This is separate from the Case Management Board, chaired by HMP Grampian. The throughcare meeting identifies new upcoming liberations and discusses accommodation and support needs, including voluntary throughcare and actions to be taken. This case was initially discussed at the throughcare meeting at the end of May 2023, two and a half months in advance of Sheila's liberation. A homeless application was completed at the prison as she would have no fixed abode on release and a referral made to the in-house Housing First service, managed within the Options & Homelessness Team.

The Housing Officer (HF) made several visits to the prison to plan for release and also attended the Case Management Board virtually, so that all partners were aware of the plan. Housing options and temporary accommodation were discussed with Sheila. She was keen to be housed in a small village in Aberdeenshire near to family support. There was not a high demand for the area preferred and a permanent property was identified. The potential offer was discussed with Sheila before a formal offer was made 10 days before her liberation date. Sign up was arranged to be completed over the phone at 2pm on the day of her release and the key safe code for access to keys was provided.

Shine Throughcare and Mentoring service supported Sheila on liberation and liaised with the Housing First worker about access to the property and phone contact etc.

Temporary accommodation was not required as she was able to stay with her mother for a week until the property was furnished through a fast-tracked community care grant application and with additional items sourced through Housing First funding.

Sheila continues to retain her tenancy with ongoing support from Housing First and her mother.

Standard 4: Following Release

Individuals are supported to sustain their accommodation and work towards their housing aspirations, contributing towards reducing reoffending.

For those who have requested throughcare services:

- Partners work collaboratively with individuals who have returned to the community, continuing to develop the agreed plan and agreeing lead responsibility / handover arrangements.
- Individuals and families are supported to sustain accommodation where appropriate following liberation and to continue to work towards realising their full potential. The length of support provided will be dependent on the individual's support plan. For those with a high level of complex needs this may be for a long period.
- Justice Social Work should notify housing of any recalls where HDC is breached so that they can keep it open for release if possible or end it appropriately if not.

For those who have chosen not to engage with throughcare services, partners should:

- Consider the involvement of other third sector services
- Encourage a connection with Peer Support
- Develop stickability and be a service that perseveres to support the individual
- Be aware that non-compliance with HDC may not be clear if the individual does not wish to engage with support.

Checklist for Partners: Standard 4 – Following Release

Activity	When	Who	Completed?
Partners work collaboratively with individuals in the community and continue to develop the agreed plan	As agreed by all parties	Housing, throughcare services, JCP, Health, Social Work, Education, PSP, Mentors 3 rd Sector, Family, NHS. Lead worker agreed	
Housing progress reviewed by all parties involved at 12 weeks stage and at agreed timescales beyond this	12 weeks	All parties involved led by lead worker	
Encourage a connection with Peer Support	12 weeks	All parties involved	
Individuals are supported to sustain their accommodation and work towards their housing aspiration.	As agreed by all parties	Housing and relevant parties	

Standard 4: Good Practice Examples

Tommy

Tommy is 38 years old and lives in the Renfrewshire area. He had a traumatic childhood with his parents separating when he was five years old and his mum leaving him and his sister with his father 3 years later. Both he and his sister were sexually abused by a family member and when he was 9 years old his behaviour became erratic. He says he deliberately 'acted out' so he would be placed in care. Tommy stayed in 2 different children's homes until he was about 15 years old. While in the care system, Tommy was abused physically, emotionally and sexually by members of staff.

As a result of this trauma, Tommy became involved with drugs and alcohol at a very young age. When he was 21, he began to sell heroin and used this drug and crack cocaine regularly.

Tommy has been in prison for most of his adult life and has a high number of convictions for Serious Assault and Permanent Disfigurement, Possession of Firearms and Breach of the Peace. He does, however, feel a lot of remorse for the things that he has done. Tommy was previously on a Drug Treatment and Testing Order, however, he was taken into custody for not complying with the order.

Tommy was released from prison in August 2015 and has not returned. Since leaving prison he has engaged with the Persistent Offenders Programme (POP) and has recently been discharged.

He did find it hard to adjust to community life, was lonely and anxious on a daily basis. He initially stayed in homeless accommodation although spent most of his time with friends. In November 2015, Tommy was referred to Turning Point Scotland's (TPS) Housing First Service in Renfrewshire. It took him a while to engage with the Housing First Service. The first assessment period usually takes place over 6 weeks, but this was extended to give Tommy more time to get to know the staff as he had trust issues. Initially Tommy talked a lot about violent thoughts and seemed to be harbouring a lot of anger therefore staff at TPS carried out a risk assessment and assessed the risk as high. This was discussed with Tommy who became upset as he felt he was being judged and advised he would never hurt a member of staff. At this point he said he no longer wanted support. Instead of closing Tommy's case, however, staff sent him a text saying they understood he was upset and he could contact staff whenever he felt ready. Tommy called a few days later, spoke about his feelings and agreed to meet with staff again.

Tommy refused the initial tenancy offered as the area was known for drug dealing and he wanted to get away from this. He was supported to apply to the Rent Deposit Scheme and was successful in obtaining a private let in an area of his choosing. Tommy is happy with his flat and was supported to set up his utilities, apply for furnishing through the Scottish Welfare Fund and attend appointments with services, particularly his GP and Job Centre Plus.

Although he receives practical support a lot of the support he receives is emotional and he often talks with staff about his childhood trauma and how this affected him. Tommy has since been supported by Victim Support and was referred to a counselling service. Tommy's GP also asked for psychological input from the addiction service to help him with his anger management. He has since been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

He is currently on Methadone and takes non-prescription drugs but is keen to stop both of these and gain employment in the near future. He actively tries to reduce his criminal activity by avoiding certain areas and people. The persistence of support workers has helped him to respect himself as well as others. He has now been in his tenancy for over 18 months and although there have been some practical issues, these have been resolved and he is doing well.

Mark

Dumfries and Galloway Housing Options and Homeless Service (HOHS) were aware of Mark's case due to receiving the SPS Liberation Reports and attending the Multi Agency Community Reintegration Board (MACRIB) Meetings with HMP Dumfries and other partners.

Mark was serving a 2-year sentence for offences under MAPPA and a homeless application was taken in January 2023. This was Mark's first time accessing the Homeless Service within D&G and was found unintentionally homeless.

Mark was liberated from HMP Dumfries in January 2023 and was provided with temporary furnished accommodation.

He suffered with health problems that affected him both physically and mentally and this impacted on the type of temporary and permanent accommodation he could reside in.

HMP Dumfries facilitated a further meeting to discuss Mark's health conditions.

Mark engaged with Housing Support, and this was provided by Turning Point Scotland.

Mark was permanently accommodated through Dumfries and Galloway's Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners Wheatley Homes South (WHS) and he moved into his tenancy September 2023.

Turning Point Scotland and the HOHS continued to support Mark up until October 2023, when Housing Support ended in a planned way as Mark was settled into his tenancy.

As at March 2024, Mark remains in his WHS tenancy and there has been no further re-offending that has resulted in re-admission to prison.

5 Areas for further Strategic Development – SHORE Action Plan

- 5.1 Through drafting these refreshed quality standards, a number of future strategic developments have been identified for the Strategic Oversight Group to consider. These have been set out in an action plan below.
- 5.2 We anticipate progress against the action plan will be reported bi-annually by the Strategic Oversight Group to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and the Housing Minister.
- 5.3 Some areas have been identified as aspirational, and which will inform future direction of SHORE. These include the following:
- To undertake a detailed analysis of the housing issues for different groups of those in and leaving prison, including unplanned releases, for example, young people, people returning to rural areas, older people, and ensure the standards are updated to reflect any specific findings.
 - In recognition of the particular housing needs experienced by women, and in line with the [SPS Strategy for Women in Custody](#), we will undertake a literature review of the impact of imprisonment and domestic abuse on women’s housing needs.

Outcome	Actions	Timescale	Lead Responsibility
Strengthened preventative approach to SHORE	Engage with Police Scotland, Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service and Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service to ensure there are processes for individual’s housing needs to be assessed at the earlier stages of arrest and at court, and handover arrangements are agreed with SPS	December 2026	SG
	Work with Social Work and the Court services to ensure that background reports consider an individual’s housing history and the effect that sentencing will have on their current housing situation, and develop a process to ensure these reports accompany an individual into custody	December 2024	Social Work/SPS
Strengthened partnership working	Develop links with bodies representing private landlords, such as the Scottish Association of Landlords	December 2024	SG/SPS
	Engage with SFHA and Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations to identify link officers for prisons	December 2004	SPS
	Connect with the Promise team to identify any additional actions that may be required within the SHORE standards process to support care experienced young people to access housing on release and to enable the implementation of the Promise commitments by partners	December 2024	SG
Information/awareness for service users	Develop Easy Read Leaflets, information packs and induction loops. This should include information about people’s housing rights	February 2025	SHORE SOG
	Encourage partners to make use of radio and tv in Scottish prisons – staggered roll out	March 2025 (HMP Barlinnie)	SPS

	Explore access to independent advocacy to support service users to understand the SHORE standards and their rights around housing	February 2025	SPS
	Develop a standard pre-release module for individuals in prison in Tenancy Management for delivery with partners	April 2025	SHORE SOG
Information /awareness for families	Develop clear mechanisms and processes to enable effective engagement with families (where relevant) at each stage of the SHORE process	April 2025	SPS/LA
	Connect with prison visitor centres to ensure families have access to appropriate information and support around housing issues and their associated rights	April 2025	SPS
An agreed set of Performance Indicators for SHORE	Develop performance management indicators to monitor the standards (informed by South Lanarkshire/HMP Addiewell performance indicator pilot)	March 2025	SHORE SOG
	Roll out agreed performance management indicators across local authorities / prison estate	May 2025	SHORE SOG
Improved use of technology	Work with Digital Services to ensure all Links Centres have Teams facilities for partners to engage with services users when face to face meetings are not possible. This could also be used for viewing properties	March 2025	SPS
	Work with Digital Services to enable individuals to have 'white list' access to the internet to support access to online services including local authority services	April 2025	SPS
Dedicated resource to deliver housing advice and support services within Scottish prisons	Work with COSLA, ALACHO and SOLACE to consider options to deliver prison based housing advice and support services	June 2025	SHORE SOG
Improved knowledge and awareness of those working in the housing and justice sectors	SPS to ensure 100 members of staff have access to the Housing Options Training Toolkit	April 2025	SPS
Written guidance for housing staff on handling of key issues which arise for those in and leaving prison	Evaluate findings from Fife Council's pilot and SPS' case management pilot to make recommendations for a national service delivery model and guidance e.g. Explore solutions for the storage of personal documents and belongings and draft guidance	June 2025	SHORE SOG
A more consistent approach to Case Management	Provide awareness sessions for Peer Supporters	March 2025	SPS

Annex A: Checklist for Partners (Standards 1 – 4)

Activity	When	Who	Completed?
For all people in custody, including those on remand, identify immediate housing issues and contact landlord.	First Night (if unable to take part in the interview, review within 24/48/72 hours)	SPS	
Complete full screening tool, identifying any housing and welfare issues, critical health and social care needs, employment issues and make referral to landlord/ appropriate local authority/ prison work coach/health professional/ third sector organisations.	72 hours	SPS	
Discuss consent to share information with all individuals, the type of information to be shared and with whom and the likely consequences, making an appropriate entry on the prison record system.	72 hours	SPS	
Encourage individuals to attend induction /engage with services	72 hours	SPS	
Complete change of circumstances / benefit forms to ensure Housing Benefit / housing element paid where possible	72 hours	Local authorities / SPS / Partner agencies	
Check whether the sentence is longer than the stipulated housing benefit / universal credit payment period, then make arrangements, in order to help the individual to avoid getting into debt and allowing them to move back into their existing accommodation / end the tenancy appropriately. Independent Advocacy should be considered in these cases	72 hours	Housing / landlord / SPS	
Promote Third and Voluntary Sector or LA throughcare services at induction and make appropriate referrals	72 hours	SPS / Housing	
Encourage and assist individuals to contact their landlord to advise them of their situation	72 hours	SPS / Housing	
Encourage and assist individuals who own their own home to contact their mortgage lender to discuss options.	72 hours	SPS / Housing	
Where an individual has been living with family and friends and the relationship has broken down refer to a Family Contact Officers (FCOs), Personal Officer or family mediation services (if consistent with welfare).	72 hours	SPS / Housing	
Respond to referral	Within 5 working days	Local authority Housing Contact to the Generic email address provided for Links Centre	

Ascertain current position in the housing/homeless system and jointly agree prevention options, how the case should be handled and by whom.	14 days	Housing and SPS	
Adopt a Housing Options approach.	As early as possible	Housing	
Support individuals to make mainstream housing applications, if appropriate, at the earliest opportunity, using the housing providers preferred method e.g. paper application, online application, downloadable form and ensure individual has all the necessary documentation. Action to replace or retrieve documents if not.	As early as possible	SPS	
Update Community Integration Plan domains on PR2 at each intervention	Immediately	SPS / Housing where based in an establishment	
Partners work collaboratively with individuals to plan for sustainable accommodation and support as part of a case management approach.	5 working days to 12 weeks prior to release	SPS / Housing / SW, NHS and partners	
Undertake a housing options approach to meeting the individual's housing needs.	5 working days to 12 weeks prior to release	Housing	
For individuals with a current tenancy: Social landlords consider such possibilities as allowing them to sublet their house during their sentence, negotiating and organising for someone else to occupy the property for the period that the individual is in prison or assisting them to terminate their tenancy and provide suitable accommodation on release.	5 working days to 12 weeks prior to release	Housing	
Facilitate advice and planning regarding finance, benefit and debt. Consider whether interventions such as arrears repayment scheme are necessary.	5 working days to 12 weeks prior to release	SPS	
Promote throughcare services to individuals and their families.	5 working days to 12 weeks prior to release	SPS	
Identify relevant programmes for the individual to complete during their sentence (e.g. health care, substance recovery, employment, citizenship, life skills and tenancy management).	5 working days to 12 weeks prior to release	SPS	
Update Community Integration Plan domains on PR2 at each intervention	Immediately	SPS / Housing / other community partners where based in an establishment	
SPS staff in conjunction with partners review the individual's community integration plan throughout sentence to ensure appropriate accommodation is available on release.	Final reviews 6-8 weeks and 7 days prior to release	SPS and all partners involved in the plan	
If homeless make contact with the appropriate Homelessness team to ensure Homelessness applications are completed in advance.	8 weeks prior to release	SPS /Housing	

Individuals supported to complete and submit Scottish Welfare Fund application where required.	8 weeks prior to release	SPS / Housing / other community partners	
Accommodation and support arrangements put in place.	24 – 48 hours prior to release	Housing, community partners	
Relevant partners liaise with each other right up to release to ensure reintegration is as seamless as possible and agree on a lead officer.	Ongoing	SPS, Housing, Throughcare services, JCP, Health (including prison and community based mental health, substance use or recovery services), Social Work, Education, PSP, Mentors Third Sector, Family, NHS	
Update Community Integration Plan domains on PR2 at each intervention	Immediately	SPS / Housing / Other community partners where based in an establishment	
Partners work collaboratively with individuals in the community and continue to develop the agreed plan	As agreed by all parties	Housing, throughcare services, JCP, Health, Social Work, Education, PSP, Mentors 3 rd Sector, Family, NHS. Lead worker agreed	
Housing progress reviewed by all parties involved at 12 weeks stage and at agreed timescales beyond this	12 weeks	All parties involved led by lead worker	
Encourage a connection with Peer Support	12 weeks	All parties involved	
Individuals are supported to sustain their accommodation and work towards their housing aspiration.	As agreed by all parties	Housing and relevant parties	

Annex B: Legislative and Policy Context

6 Justice

- 6.1 The Ministerial Group on Offender Reintegration was established in October 2013 to address the need for better integration between the justice system and wider universal services. [The Report of the Ministerial Group on Offender Reintegration](#) found the needs of those serving short term sentences were complex and multifaceted.
- 6.2 [SPS Corporate Plan 2023-28](#) aims to strengthen our relationships with partners and stakeholders (including Community Justice Partnership arrangements) to better meet the needs and risks of those in and leaving our care. SPS will work effectively and collaboratively with organisations at a strategic and delivery level. These partners relations support the transitions in and out of prison and provide support opportunities and connections while someone is in SPS' care.
- 6.3 Quality indicators within the [HMIPS Standards for Inspecting and Monitoring Prisons](#) in Scotland include the following around access to accommodation:
- Government agencies, private and third sector services are facilitated to work together to prepare a jointly agreed release plan and ensure continuity of support to meet the community integration needs of each prisoner. All prisoners have the opportunity to contribute to a co-ordinated plan which prepares them for release and addresses their specific community integration needs and requirements.
- 6.4 These quality indicators relate to the Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions (Scotland) Rules 2011, Section 130: 'At an appropriate time before a prisoner is released from prison the Governor shall discuss, or arrange with some other person to discuss, with that prisoner the immediate needs or welfare issues of that prisoner upon release' and the Commentary to the European Rules for Juvenile Offenders section 100.2 and Commentary to the European Rules for Juvenile Offenders rule 102.
- 6.5 The Prisoner (Control of Release) (Scotland) Act 2015 came into effect on the 1st of February 2016 and provides SPS, on behalf of Scottish Ministers, with the discretion to bring forward the release date of people in our care by no more than 2 days for the purpose of benefitting an individual's integration into the community. A review of the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Act was conducted by SPS in consultation with the Scottish Government and partners in order to identify areas for improvement after the first year of implementation.
- 6.6 The six most common reasons for initiating a request for flexible release are:
- Accessing suitable accommodation;
 - Accessing addiction services;
 - Supporting specific health requirements;
 - Accessing community support worker;
 - Distance to travel for community services; and
 - Accessing employment.
- 6.7 Any service provider working with an individual prior to release who feels they can evidence that a service user's Earliest Date of Liberation (EDL) is problematic to their reintegration should in the first instance raise their concerns with the individual and the Establishment's Link Centre.

- 6.8 The [Community Justice \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) places a legal duty on statutory Community Justice Partners (local authorities, health boards, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Skills Development Scotland, Integration Joint Boards, Scottish Ministers (in practice SPS, Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service and Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service) to engage in a planning process and report annually on their progress towards improving community justice outcomes.
- 6.9 The [National Strategy for Community Justice](#) (NSCJ), which was revised in June 2022, recognises that a broad range of partners contribute to the achievement community justice outcomes. This includes the statutory partners, communities and the third sector, who collectively play a vital role both in the planning and delivery of services. The strategy also makes clear that collaborative working across organisations and partnerships, such as Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) and Community Safety Partnerships, is key to the improvement of outcomes and reduction of duplication. Under the 2016 Act, statutory partners have a duty of cooperation when performing their community justice functions, which may include ‘sharing information, providing advice and assistance, co-ordinating activities, and funding activities together’. There is also a statutory duty on partners to have regard to this strategy which provides a shared vision to help partners and communities work together effectively to improve community justice outcomes, while retaining the flexibility to adapt to local needs and circumstances.
- 6.10 The NSCJ sets out 4 Aims and 13 priority actions that have been identified for delivery over the lifetime of the strategy. One of these actions is ‘to ensure that the housing needs of individuals in prison are addressed consistently and at an early stage by fully implementing and embedding the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) standards across all local authority areas. As a result of fully implementing SHORE, individuals should receive timely housing advice and support that enables them to secure suitable and sustainable housing for their release into the community, irrespective of where their sentence is served. Those who are offered suitable accommodation are more likely to have positive outcomes in other areas of their lives such as health, employment, education, financial inclusion, families, relationships and social links within their communities’.
- 6.11 While recognising the need to ensure victim’s safety, the NSCJ also promotes the importance of a person-centred approach that ensures that those requiring housing support are properly engaged in the process, with their individual needs identified as early as possible.
- 6.12 For this action to be fully achieved, there is a need for partners to ‘develop and engage with multi-agency protocols that address the needs of relevant individuals (including employability, homelessness and health and social care needs, including substance use and mental health) and describe the local processes between community justice partners and prisons.’ This is integral to Aim 3 of the Strategy, ‘Ensure that services are accessible and available to address the needs of individuals accused or convicted of an offence.’
- 6.13 Community Justice Scotland and Scottish Government are currently exploring the provision of non-statutory, voluntary throughcare and mentoring services across Scotland for individuals serving short term prison sentences of up to 4 years. The

design and development phase will also consider the potential to commission services to provide throughcare to individuals on remand. A through-care and resettlement model is being established and will replace the PSP model by April 2025.

- 6.14 However, the project scope does not include voluntary throughcare delivered by local authorities (or their partners) as part of their statutory role, throughcare support delivered by Justice Social Work (JSW) staff within the supervision of individuals released from long sentences, or subject to other post-release orders or any throughcare and mentoring services which may be delivered by the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) now or in the future.
- 6.15 The research work that forms part of the commissioning project will consider how the wider activities of the local authorities, JSW, the SPS and other organisations impact on the throughcare services which will be commissioned by this project. The new model will not be in place until April 2025.
- 6.16 While still under review, there are no current plans to reintroduce the SPS Throughcare Support Service. However, SPS is committed to support continuous improvement in relation to community reintegration through close partnership working with local authorities, Public Social Partnerships (PSPs) and other third sector organisations, DWP and Social Security Scotland.

7 Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023

- 7.1 The Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Bill was passed by Scottish Parliament on June 2023 and received Royal Assent in August of the same year. Individual sections of the Act will be brought into force gradually, with the majority schedules to be brought in during 2024. Scottish Government officials will liaise with stakeholder organisations to include them in the necessary planning and preparation for the various provisions to be commenced.
- 7.2 The main provisions of the Act are in 2 parts:
- Part 1 of the Act focuses on decisions relating to bail and remand, with the aim of refocusing the use of remand so that it is reserved for cases where the individual poses a risk to public safety, including victim safety, or, in certain circumstances, poses a risk to the delivery of justice. Amongst other changes, the Act amends the legal framework, which is used to make bail decisions, however decision-making on bail will remain with the independent court in each individual case.
 - Part 2 of the Act focuses on improving the support provided to people leaving prison, to help them successfully resettle in their communities. The provisions in part 2 include: ending scheduled liberation from prison on a Friday and the day before a public holiday; placing new duties on named public sector partners to engage in pre-release planning, and the establishment of national standards of throughcare support which will apply to those on remand and who have been sentenced and are intended to support consistency in approach across Scotland.
- 7.3 Part 2 of the Act perhaps has the most relevance for housing services, in particular:
- When brought into force, Section 8 will end scheduled releases on a Friday and the day before a public holiday (adding these dates to the existing list of excepted days (Sat,

Sun, public holidays)). This recognises that release on these days can mean it is more difficult for individuals to access the services they need, which can include housing services. This provision is also intended to support all those being released from prison having the same opportunity to access the services they need at the point of release.

- Section 12 will introduce a new release planning duty on named partners (including local authorities). Under this section, the named partners will be required to comply with a request from SPS to engage in the development, management and delivery of an individual's release plan. This duty covers both those on remand and sentenced and is intended to support more holistic release planning starting at an earlier point of an individual's time in custody, including in relation to an individual's housing needs. That is intended to reduce the demand for urgent / emergency support.
- Section 13 will require Scottish Ministers to develop and publish statutory throughcare standards. These standards must make provision for a minimum standards and outcomes to be met by all providers of throughcare support in Scotland. The standards will apply to both those on remand and sentenced engaging with throughcare support and will ensure more consistent support for people leaving prison across Scotland.

8 Housing, Homelessness and Housing Support

- 8.1 Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, if someone is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, local authorities have a legal duty to help, by:
- Providing information and advice on homelessness and the prevention of homelessness;
 - Offering temporary or permanent accommodation.
- 8.2 Prison leavers are covered in the Code of Guidance on Homelessness, updated in 2019. It highlights the SHORE Standards³ and sets out that local authorities should 'work together with SPS and individual prisons, social work, health, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and third sector organisations to put in place measures to prevent people becoming homeless on entering and leaving prison'.
- 8.3 Section 17 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 states that a social landlord may commence proceedings to recover possession of a property if they have reasonable grounds for believing that a property is unoccupied, and the tenant does not intend to occupy it as their home. Social landlords should make necessary enquiries to ensure that both of the conditions are satisfied before taking steps to end a tenancy. There could be valid reasons why a tenant would need to leave the property empty for some time, including a stay in prison, and therefore this should form part of their enquiry. While there is a duty on tenants to let the landlord know if they are to be absent from the property for a period of time, failure on the part of the tenant to do so should not in itself constitute proof of abandonment. Every reasonable attempt should be made by the landlord to satisfy itself that the house is unoccupied and that the tenant has no intention of re-occupying it. The admission data which SPS sends to local authorities on a weekly basis may assist with these enquiries.

³ paragraph 2.30 that 'local authorities and prisons should refer to the Scottish Quality Standards – Housing Advice, Information and Support for People In and Leaving Prison (SHORE Standards) and try and anticipate future problems by considering what action is needed from the beginning of an individual's sentence, rather than waiting until release'

- 8.4 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 requires local authorities to assess the housing support needs of homeless applicants who are unintentionally homeless, or threatened with homelessness. The assessment of housing support may need to be ongoing and may be formed by the views of partner agencies. The local authority needs to ensure that housing support services are provided to those assessed as being in need of them. This duty includes people leaving prison who make a homelessness application.
- 8.5 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 also introduced “pre-action requirements” which social landlords have to follow before they can take a tenant to court for arrears of rent. These include giving the tenant clear information about their tenancy agreement, exploring eligibility for Housing Benefit, identifying sources of advice and assistance and, potentially, agreeing a payment plan for arrears. Individuals in prison who hold a tenancy and are in arrears of rent are also covered by these requirements.
- 8.6 Since 2010, advice and information has generally been provided through a Housing Options approach. This is an advice process which starts when someone approaches a local authority with a housing problem and involves considering their housing options and choices in the widest sense, with a focus on early intervention. Housing Options Guidance March 2016 published jointly by COSLA and the Scottish Government also details local authorities’ responsibilities in preventing homelessness and offering accurate and effective advice and assistance in order to help sustain or secure accommodation for those leaving prison.
- 8.7 In 2017 the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was established by the Scottish Government to tackle homelessness. One of HARSAG’s recommendations was to change the duty on local authorities, as required by the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, to a power, if they think fit, to investigate whether a person applying to them for accommodation became homeless or threatened with homelessness intentionally. Anyone deemed to be unintentionally homeless is entitled to settled permanent accommodation. Those assessed as intentionally homeless still have a right to assistance with housing. The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 which made this provision came into effect in November 2019.
- 8.8 HARSAG also recommended the suspension of the local connection test and on 29 November the Homeless Persons (Suspension of Referrals between Local Authorities) (Scotland) Order 2022 came into force. This legislation suspends referrals between Scottish local authorities for homeless households, including for people leaving prison, on the basis of their local connection. This gives people in housing crisis the freedom to settle where they choose with access to the support they need and aims to help them to integrate more fully into the local community and to reduce repeat homelessness. The impact of this policy is being measured by a monitoring and reporting framework and the evidence is being reported to Scottish Ministers.
- 8.9 Scottish Government and COSLA published their Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan in 2018, and an Updated Action Plan was published in 2020, in response to COVID-19, which outlined how national government, local government and third sector partners will work together on a shared ambition to end homelessness. The Action Plan includes a commitment to support local authorities and delivery partners in their implementation of preventative pathways, including the SHORE standards. Scottish

Government reports annually to Scottish Parliament on progress of priority actions in the Plan.

- 8.10 In June 2019 Hard Edges Scotland, which was commissioned by Lankelly Chase and the Robertson Trust, and authored by Heriot-Watt University, was published. The research highlights the complexity of the lives of people facing multiple disadvantage and illustrates the mismatch between the multiple disadvantages people face and the way that services are often set up to address 'single issues'. One of the key findings in Scotland was that 5,700 adults experience three 'core' forms of severe and multiple disadvantage (homelessness, offending and substance dependency) each year. This demonstrates a need for services to be coordinated to ensure that service users receive the assistance they require.
- 8.11 New homelessness prevention duties were introduced to Scottish Parliament in March 2024 as part of the Housing (Scotland) Bill. The duties are based on the principles that prevention should be a shared public responsibility, that there should be earlier intervention across systems and that people facing homelessness should have more choice and control over where they live.

9 Welfare

Universal Credit

- 9.1 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 became law throughout the UK on 8 March 2012 and is a key element of the Government's deficit reduction agenda. It introduced Universal Credit which replaces six legacy benefits including Housing Benefit and changes to the Work Programme and is the biggest change to the welfare state in the last 60 years. Universal Credit and the benefit cap both have implications on an individual's housing costs support. The 52 week housing benefit for those on remand was not carried forward into Universal Credit. Individuals on remand or sentenced can claim the housing element of Universal Credit, provided: they were entitled to the benefit as a single person before entering custody; they received an award for accommodation costs; and their time in prison is not expected to exceed six months (this includes time on remand). If the claim is accepted, only the accommodation cost element of Universal Credit will be paid.
- 9.2 Where one member of a Universal Credit couple claim becomes a prisoner, that member becomes an ineligible partner and the remaining member can continue to claim as a single person. The usual principles for housing would apply. If the remaining member is not named on the tenancy agreement, they can be 'treated as liable' to make payments of rent.

Housing Benefit

- 9.3 It is not possible to submit a claim for Housing Benefit unless a claimant lives in Temporary Accommodation, has reached State Pension age or live in sheltered or supported housing with special facilities such as alarms or wardens. Individuals who are eligible for Housing Benefit can only claim if they are likely to be on remand for less than 52 weeks; are not likely to be in prison for more than 13 weeks (including any time on remand); are intending to return home on release

- 9.4 For those who are not eligible for Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, rent arrears may accrue quickly. How much an individual receives is dependent on their circumstances. Universal Credit can only be backdated for up to one month. It is therefore critical to see individuals as early as possible on admission to prevent arrears building up and potential eviction. Early action and good communication are intrinsic to maintaining a tenancy.

10 Department for Work and Pensions – Prison Work Coach

Employability and Benefit Support

- 10.1 The Prison Work Coach (PWC) is the training, employment and benefit link for individuals at induction, during their sentence or pre-release. They help those on shorter sentences with job retention, and where appropriate, continuation of Universal Credit Housing Costs. The PWC will also provide information about benefits, jobs, training and other opportunities available within the prison or upon release. They work collaboratively with Prison staff/services, employers and other Jobcentre Plus colleagues to provide joined up work and benefit focused support.

Supporting the safeguarding of tenancies to prevent homelessness on release

- 10.2 PWCs support related prison partner organisations in their responsibility to ensure housing costs are maintained for those serving short term sentences where appropriate by facilitating links into DWP Universal Credit Service Centre. This includes:
- Working with prison/Jobcentre colleagues to identify those serving short term sentences;
 - Working with Service Centre colleagues so they can ensure Universal Credit housing costs continue where appropriate.

Ensuring a smooth financial transition back into the community by supporting prison leavers' timely access to benefits and financial support from the day of release where needed

- 10.3 PWCs support individuals to make/prepare their claim to benefits prior to release to ensure they have access to financial support from the day of release. This includes:
- Proactively identifying those due to be released and offering prison work coach support through the most appropriate channel (internal messaging / mailshot) from week 12;
 - Carrying out work focused face-to-face interviews with those who take up support;
 - Supporting those claiming Universal Credit to ensure they understand all the necessary documentation and information needed to make their claim (i.e. bank account details, identification, housing costs information) and booking an appointment at the local jobcentre on the day of release or as early as possible;
 - Ensuring that those due to be liberated understand the importance of attending the appointment booked for them in the Jobcentre on release to get access to benefits and support;
 - Referring/ signposting to appropriate post-release support.

- 10.4 The Welfare Funds (Scotland) Act 2015 places a statutory duty on each local authority to maintain a Welfare Fund and the Welfare Funds (Scotland) Regulations 2016 set out how the fund should be administered. While Local Authorities have discretion over how the scheme is delivered, the Scottish Welfare Fund Statutory Guidance (March 2021) provides a framework as to how the needs of those in and leaving prison (and those they stay with on temporary release) should be considered.
- 10.5 The Scottish Government committed to an independent review of the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) as part of the 2021 Bute House Agreement. This was in the context of heightened pressure on the SWF during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Review of the SWF was published on 24 March 2023. The Scottish Government then established a Policy Advisory Group who assisted to consider and develop improvements identified within the SWF Action Plan. Improvements include:
- Develop and provide standardised communication messages to local authorities and Scottish Prisons for SWF advertisement and information sharing;
 - Scottish Government will work with stakeholders to improve awareness of the SWF and consistency in approach throughout the country on a national level. These messages will be tailored to meet the needs of specific groups, such as those soon to be liberated from prison;
 - Detailed reporting of decision outcomes, including for those who are in and leaving prison, accessed the review system as part of their application or had an onward referral; and
 - Develop a simple, streamlined and standardised physical application process for people in and leaving prison. In the longer term, the Scottish Government will explore with the Scottish Prison Service how online applications could be facilitated within the institutional setting to enable for quicker processing and decisions from local authorities on applications.

11 Health and Social Work

- 11.1 The transfer of responsibility and accountability for the provision of health care from SPS to NHS Health Boards in 2011 followed the introduction of Sections 110 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010. In addition, Health Board Provision of Healthcare in Prisons (Scotland) Directions 2011 came into force in 2011.
- 11.2 A national Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) between the SPS and NHS Health Boards that have prisons in their area have been in place since transfer, which set out agreed governance and information data sharing arrangements in the provision of health care services in prisons. SPS is currently working with the NHS to update the current data sharing agreement to ensure that all health boards receive data on admissions and scheduled liberations to allow them to provide appropriate support.
- 11.3 Local councils have a duty under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 to assess a person's community care needs and decide whether to arrange any services. Any assistance should be based on an assessment of the person's care needs and should take account of their preferences.

- 11.4 The Memorandum of Understanding developed by SPS and Social Work Scotland provides a governance framework for the provision of Prison based Social Work services for people in and leaving prison. The common purpose is to reduce reoffending by ensuring that people in prison have access to an appropriate range and quality of prison based social work services according to risks, needs and responsiveness.
- 11.5 Through the Public Bodies (Joint working) Act (2014), the integration of Health and Social Care should encourage improvement in partnership working to support people with complex needs, including those leaving prison. The reforms aim to ensure services are well integrated and that people receive the care they need at the right time, by the right person(s) and in the right setting to achieve the right outcome. The Act is centred on anticipatory and preventative care which involves adopting a "thinking ahead" philosophy of care that allows practitioners and their teams to work with people and those close to them to set and achieve common goals.
- 11.6 Rights, Respect and Recovery, which was published in 2018, is Scotland's strategy to improve health by preventing and reducing alcohol and drug use, harm and related deaths. The focus is on prevention, which will reduce the individual, family and societal factors which increase the likelihood of alcohol and drug use and related harm.
- 11.7 The Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards: Access, Choice, Support introduced by Scottish Government in May 2021, define what is needed for the consistent delivery of safe and accessible day treatment and support in Scotland. They apply to all services and organisations responsible for the delivery of care in a recovery orientated system. MAT Standard 8 – **All people have access to independent advocacy and support for housing, welfare and income needs** – is particularly relevant to the SHORE Standards in that those working with them should have policies and procedures to ensure people are informed of independent advocacy services that empower them to access their rights and enable informed decision making.
- 11.8 The National Drugs Mission Plan 2022-2026, published by the Scottish Government in August 2022 aims to reduce drug deaths and improve the lives of those impacted by drugs. This will be accomplished by preventing people from developing problem drug use; reducing harms from the consumption of drugs; getting more people into high quality treatment and recovery services; addressing the needs of people with multiple and complex needs and supporting families and communities affected by problem drug use. It complements and builds upon Rights, Respect and Recovery (2018), Scotland's alcohol and drug strategy.
- 11.9 The Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027 states that 'The transition from prison back to the community is a particularly high risk period for people's mental health and continuity of care is important'. Local Authorities have significant opportunities to develop joined up policy and service provision in this area.

12 Children and Young People

- 12.1 The Whole System Approach is the programme for addressing the needs of young people involved in committing crime. The approach emphasises the need for organisations to work together to support individuals and families with tailored support based on the needs of the individual. Early and effective intervention and transitions to and from the community are both key to this approach. A Guide to Youth

Justice in Scotland: policy, practice and legislation (June 2021) published and updated annually by the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice gives an overview of historical developments which have determined how Scotland deals with children and young people who offend and outlines relevant policy, rights and legislation pertinent to this area of work, having a specific chapter on reintegration and transitions.

- 12.2 For children and young people, housing problems may pre-date and be exacerbated by, or may be the result of, entry to custody, with accommodation consistently identified as a key concern for young people leaving custody.⁴ In the 2017 Scottish Prison Service (SPS) prisoner survey⁵, 4% of young people reported losing their tenancy or accommodation when they entered custody and 29% reported not knowing where they would live on release.
- 12.3 In research conducted by Cesaroni⁶, 66% of young people in HMP&YOI Polmont stated it was very important to receive support to find accommodation, the second most important factor behind gaining help to find employment. Housing and accommodation is often a particularly challenging area for children and young people by virtue of the high level and range of complex needs and vulnerabilities presented by many children and young people leaving secure care, many of whom will never previously have been really ‘settled’ and have limited skills and experience of independent living and managing a home.
- 12.4 Moreover, transitions into and out of custody can be stressful, overwhelming and disorientating experiences for young people, with the potential to be experienced as traumatic or retraumatising.⁷ Such transitions require involving the readjustment to a new life regime, becoming familiar with a new environment and renegotiating relationships, to the extent that “Children’s related experiences [in the weeks post-release] are consistent with symptoms of adjustment disorders which carry increased risks of long-term psychiatric illnesses and suicide”.⁸
- 12.5 It is therefore unsurprising that the period immediately following release is associated with increased risk of breach, reoffending and other negative outcomes, with HMIPS (2019b) highlighting that the mortality rate for all causes of death for those leaving custody is highest in the 30 days following release, with the rate of self-inflicted deaths disproportionately high. Housing and accommodation also intersects with a range of the other areas for effective reintegration, including physical and mental health and accessing health services, benefits, education, training and employment. The Howard League for Penal Reform⁹ (2020: 2) have stated: “A roof over a child’s head is not sufficient to reintegrate a child into the community, but an address is essential to enable planning to meet a child’s needs for education, leisure, health and other important networks of support”. This underlines the critical importance of ensuring such challenges are addressed and children are fully supported, with housing is therefore often a key area where structural support is needed for children and young people leaving custody. Such support should be provided alongside other areas often

⁴ Scottish Government, 2015

⁵ [Publications | Scottish Prison Service \(sps.gov.uk\)](#)

⁶ In [Children and Young People in Custody in Scotland: Looking behind the Data](#). Youth Justice Improvement Board, October 2017 [YOUTH JUSTICE IMPROVEMENT BOARD \(cyji.org.uk\)](#)

⁷ Vaswani and Paul, 2019

⁸ Bateman and Hazel, (2015, p4) [Custody to Community – How young people cope with release](#)

⁹ [The Howard League | Supporting children from custody into the community](#)

requiring structural support such as education, training and employment, health and substance misuse, involvement of families and financial stability, as well as personal support (CYCJ, 2020). All support should be provided in a manner that fulfils the characteristics of effective throughcare (CYCJ, 2020). At a practice level, housing-related service provision across Scotland during the throughcare process is inconsistent and varies by area. This renders the implementation of these Standards crucial.

- 12.6 On 1st April 2015, the Scottish Prison Service on behalf of the Scottish Ministers joined many other public bodies (including local authorities and health boards) in Scotland to become a national corporate parent under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Part 9 (Corporate Parenting) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places responsibilities on corporate parents to improve the lives and futures of Scotland’s looked after children, young people and care leavers. In practice, this means that partners must listen to the needs, fears, challenges and wishes of these groups and be proactive in their approach to improve outcomes and wellbeing.
- 12.7 A key need and pre-release area for Young People in the care of the SPS is housing and the SHORE Standards will help support this need. The Act also places a duty on corporate parents to collaborate to safeguard or promote their wellbeing. As corporate parents SPS and Local Authorities need to engage with each other to provide support with regards to appropriate accommodation options for Care Leavers and have this area as a key feature within our Young Peoples plans if they are between the ages of 16 to 18 inclusive. If they are 19 to 25 inclusive, they are entitled to after care. Aftercare is ‘advice, guidance and assistance’, which may include helping a young person to secure accommodation, education and employment opportunities. The SPS Corporate Parenting Strategy states that ‘Care experienced and care leavers are supported to access appropriate housing options.’ The Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023 which introduces the duty to engage in the development, management and delivery of a release plan for bodies such as local authorities will help support this.
- 12.8 Referral to family mediation and reconciliation service should be considered, depending on the individual’s circumstances and if consistent with their welfare. It is recognised that “while returning to their family of origin or previous household on return to the community may be an option for some young people, this is not always the most suitable place, as it can be unstable and quickly break down which may result in the young person being placed in risky situations and/or experiencing further trauma-related harm”.¹⁰
- 12.9 The Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway which was developed by the A Way Home Coalition requires a response which ensures that “every child or young person leaving secure care or custody has suitable accommodation that is identified before their return to the community and supports should be provided, both while in secure care and custody and on release”.

¹⁰ Bateman et al, 2013. Who cares? Scotland, 2014.

13 Women

- 13.1 Scotland has one of the highest female prison population rates in Western Europe (138 per 100,000 population in April 2023) and women represent 4% of the prison population in Scotland. Many women in contact with the justice system have complex needs resulting from past trauma, abuse, poverty and addiction¹¹.
- 13.2 Recent weekly population figures (May 2024) indicate roughly 41% of women in prison were on remand. As women are more likely to be the primary carer, being remanded into custody impacts their children greatly. Only a very small proportion of children stay in their own homes when their mother is in prison which means a move away from familiar surroundings. This in turn increases the likelihood of poor academic performance, mental health problems and involvement in the criminal justice system.
- 13.3 The Commission on Women Offenders Final Report (2012) highlighted that ‘Housing and suitable accommodation is a priority for vulnerable women. If a woman is admitted to bail and returns to an environment which has a negative effect on her life, it is more likely that she will not be able to address her offending behaviour and may breach the bail order. In some cases, it is not appropriate for the woman to return to the community where the offending is alleged, or found, to have been committed’. More recently, the Prison Reform Trust (2020) report found that lack of secure housing is a significant barrier to successful rehabilitation; making employment, maintaining positive mental health and preventing a return to harmful behaviour such as substance abuse practically unachievable¹²
- 13.4 In 2015 plans to build a large women’s prison in Inverclyde were reconsidered as the Scottish Government and the Scottish Prison Service collaborated to rethink the approach to the custody of women. A Symposium report¹³ provided an international perspective on best practice in all aspects of custody for women. Shortly after, Ministers announced that there would be a small national prison for women with more complex needs and risks, and up to five innovative community based custodial units for those who could benefit from closer engagement with more local services.
- 13.5 SPS has therefore redesigned custodial arrangements for women in consultation with key stakeholders and partners and is committed to ensuring that fewer women return to custody. SPS Strategy for Women in Custody 2021-2025 explains how SPS will work with partners, stakeholders and women themselves to ensure that their time spent in custody will contribute to better outcomes for them, their families and communities. The new model of custody will ensure there are opportunities for women to express and explore the life circumstances and/or choices which led them to offend and will provide a range of evidence based interventions aimed at maximising the opportunity for reflection, reparation and rehabilitation. HMP&YOI Stirling for women opened in 2023 and replaces HMP&YOI Cornton Vale and 2 Community Custody Units were opened in 2022 – Bella Centre in Dundee which can accommodate up to 16 women and Lillias Centre in Glasgow which can house 24 women.

¹¹ [Safe+Homes+Initiative+briefing.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)

¹² [Safe+Homes+Initiative+briefing.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)

¹³ [From Vision to Reality: Transforming Scotland’s Care of Women in Custody \(2015\)](#)

Annex C: Note about Language

This section provides an explanation of some words and phrases used throughout the standards.

Appropriate	Suitable or fitting for the person or purpose
Community Custody Units (Bella Centre in Dundee and Liliac Centre in Glasgow)	The Community Custody Units (CCU) have been designed to provide safe and secure accommodation, which is trauma informed and gender specific. The CCUs will support the needs of women who would benefit from closer community contact and access to local services. Women will be supported to live independently in accommodation based on a 'shared house' principle to develop a range of independent living skills, which are reflective of real life.
HL1	This is the electronic return that Local Authorities complete, in line with Scottish Government homelessness legislation, to record homelessness applications, the assessment decision and the outcome.
HL3	The electronic return completed by Local Authorities for the monitoring of households in temporary accommodation under the Scottish Government homeless persons' legislation.
Home Detention Curfew	Home Detention Curfew (HDC) allows individuals, mainly on shorter sentences, to serve up to a quarter of their sentence (for a maximum of six months and a minimum of two weeks) on licence in the community, while wearing an electronic tag. The Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023 has set out plans for long-term prisoners to be released under licence, under a separate process. Implementation of this Act will take place gradually over 2024.
Housing First	Housing First is specifically for people whose homelessness is complex or chronic; often longstanding, recurring and accompanied by mental health issues, addictions and/or experience with the criminal justice system. It involves delivery of support, including peer support, to those with complex needs in mainstream tenancies, rather than the traditional stepped approach of emergency, then temporary accommodation before receiving a mainstream tenancy.
Independent Living Units	A stepping stone between the custodial environment and the 'domestic' situation, provided at HMP Greenock, Grampian and Castle Huntly.
Peer Support	Peer support is when people use their own lived experiences to help each other.
Prevent1	This is the electronic return which Local Authorities complete to record case level data collection on housing options/ homelessness prevention in Scotland.
Trauma-Informed Practice	Trauma-informed practice is based around five core principles: safety, helping people feel physically and emotionally safe; choice, giving people meaningful choices, and a voice in decisions that affect them; collaboration, asking people what they need, and involving them in considering how their needs can be met ¹⁴ .
Short Term Sentence	Less than four years.
Social Justice	The fair and proper administration of laws conforming to the natural law that all persons, irrespective of ethnic origin, gender, possessions, race, religion, etc., are to be treated equally and without prejudice.
Suitable	Defined by the person's assessed need and an honest assessment of the options available. The best fit for the individual and optimum use of stock available.
Sustainable	Able to be maintained.

¹⁴ Robin Johnson, co-author of "Psychologically Informed Services for Homeless People – Good practice guide" 2012, Department of Communities and Local Government

Annex D: Prison Contact Details

Prison	Category	Priority Geographical Area	Details
Addiewell (Private Prison)	Young People – Remands Adult Male – Remands Adult Male – Convicted (STP) Adult Male – Convicted (LTP) Adult Males – non offence specific protections Selected Adult Males for management reasons	North Lanarkshire South Lanarkshire	AD.Librite@sodexojusticeservices.com Tel: 01506 874500 Ext 3637
Barlinnie	Adult Male – Remands Adult Male – Convicted (STP) Adult Males – non offence specific protections Newly convicted or downgraded Adult Male LTPs awaiting space in prison of allocation Selected Adult Males for management reasons Adult Male – National Top End	Glasgow City	BarlinnieLinkCentre@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 0141 770 290
Castle Huntly	All Adult Males who meet the criteria for open conditions	National	CastleHuntlyOffenderOutcomes@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 01382 139 425
Dumfries	Young People – Remands Adult Male – Remands Adult Male – Convicted (STP) Adult Male – Sex Offender (LTP) Adult Male – Sex Offender (STP) Adult Males – non offence specific protections Selected Adult Males for management reasons	Primarily Dumfries and Galloway but also East Ayrshire North Ayrshire South Ayrshire	DumfriesOffenderOutcomesFLM@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 01387 274615

Prison	Category	Priority Geographical Area	Details
Edinburgh	Adult Male – Remands Adult Male – Convicted (STP) Adult Male – Convicted (LTP) Adult Male – Sex Offender (LTP) Adult Male – Sex Offender (STP) Adult Males – non offence specific protections Newly convicted or downgraded Adult Male LTPs awaiting space in prison of allocation Selected Adult Males for management reasons	City of Edinburgh East Lothian Midlothian Scottish Borders West Lothian	EdinburghLinkCentre@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 0131 444 3110 or 0131 444 5211
Glenochil	Adult Male – Convicted (STP) Adult Male – Convicted (LTP) Adult Male – Sex Offender (LTP) Adult Male – Sex Offender (STP) Selected Adult Males for management reasons	Clackmannanshire Falkirk Fife Stirling National Sex Offender Facility	GlenochilLinks@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 01259 767364 or 01259 767327
Grampian	Young Male Remands Young Male Convicted Young Women Remands Young Women Convicted Adult Male Remands Adult Women Remands Adult Male – Convicted (STP) Adult Male – Convicted (LTP) Adult Women Convicted (STP) Adult Women Convicted (LTPo) Newly Convicted or downgraded Adult Male LTPs awaiting space in prison of allocation Selected Adult Males or Women for management reasons Adult Male Convicted assessed suitable for Community Access with up to 24 months left to serve depending on sentence length Young People and Women assessed suitable for Community Access with up to 24 months left to serve depending on sentence length	Aberdeen Aberdeenshire Moray(part) Adult } All Shetland Males Aberdeen Aberdeenshire Moray Highland Shetland Orkney Western Isles } All Women and YOs	GrampianOffenderOutcomesFLMs@prisons.gov.scot GrampianOffenderOutcomesAdmin@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 01779 485796

Prison	Category	Priority Geographical Area	Details
Greenock	Young People Remands Adult Male Remands Adult Male Convicted (STP) Adult Male – National Top End Adult Women Remands Adult Women – Convicted (All) Adult Women assessed suitable for community access with a minimum 12 months still to serve	Argyll and Bute East Dunbartonshire East Renfrewshire Inverclyde Renfrewshire West Dunbartonshire	GreenockLinksCentre@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 01477 5787801 Ext 271
Inverness	Young People – Remands Adult Male Remands Adult Male – Convicted (STP) Adult Male – Convicted (LTP) Selected Adult Males for management reasons Adult Women assessed suitable for community access with a minimum 12 months still to serve	Highland Moray Western Isles Orkney Isles	InvernessLinks@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 01463 229030
Kilmarnock (Private Prison)	Young People – Remands Adult Male Remands Adult Male – Convicted (STP) Adult Male – Convicted (LTP) Adult Males – non offence specific protections Selected Adult Males for management reasons	Remands/STPs with Ayrshire Postcodes LTPs from Dumfries and Galloway East Ayrshire North Ayrshire South Ayrshire	KilmarnockLinkCentre@serco.cjsm.net Tel: 01563 548873
Low Moss	Adult Male Remands Adult Male – Convicted (STP) Adult Male – Convicted (LTP) Selected Adult Males for management reasons	Argyll and Bute East Dunbartonshire East Renfrewshire Inverclyde Renfrewshire West Dunbartonshire	LowMossLinks@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 0141 762 9641
Perth	Adult Male Remands Adult Male – Convicted (STP) Adult Male – Convicted (LTP) Adult Males – non offence specific protections Newly convicted or downgraded Adult Male LTPs awaiting space in prison of allocation	STPs and LTPs from Angus Dundee City Perth & Kinross LTPs from Aberdeen City	PerthLinkCentre@sps.pnn.gov.uk Tel: 01738 458138

Prison	Category	Priority Geographical Area	Details
	Selected Adult Males for management reasons	Aberdeenshire Eilean Siar Highland Moray Orkney Shetland	
Polmont	Young People – Remands Young People – Convicted (All) Adult Females	National for convicted young offenders, young remands and female adults	PolmontLinksCentre@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 01324 722 669
Shotts	Adult Male – Convicted (LTP) Adult Males – non offence specific protections Selected Adult Males for management reasons Adult Male – Convicted (10years to Life)	Glasgow City Dumfries and Galloway East Ayrshire North Ayrshire South Ayrshire LTPs other than those allocated to Edinburgh, Kilmarnock, Low Moss or Perth	ShottsLinksCentre@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 01501 824061
Stirling	Young Women Remands Young Women Convicted Adult Women – Remands Adult Women - Convicted	National	Stirlinglinkcentre@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 01786 832591
Bella Centre, Dundee (CCU)	Low Supervision Young Women Low Supervision Adult Women	Primarily those from East of Scotland area	Contact via Stirlinglinkcentre@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 01382 802601
Lilias Centre, Glasgow (CCU)	Low Supervision Young Women Low Supervision Adult Women	Primarily those from West of Scotland area	Contact via Stirlinglinkcentre@prisons.gov.scot Tel: 01382 802601

Annex E: Local Authority Contact Details

Local Authority	Housing Options Contacts
Aberdeen City Council	HousingAccess@aberdeencity.gov.uk , Prisons@Aberdeencity.gov.uk Tel: 01224 523502
Aberdeenshire Council	PrisonProtocol@aberdeenshire.gov.uk Tel: 01467 534719
Angus Council	PrisonProtocol@angus.gov.uk Tel: 03452 777 778
Argyll and Bute Council	HousingSupportReferrals@argyll-bute.gov.uk Tel: 01546 604 785

Local Authority	Housing Options Contacts
Clackmannanshire Council	home@clacks.gov.uk Tel: 01259 225115
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	hservice@cne-siar.gov.uk Tel: 01851 822821
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Nicola.Carson@dumgal.gov.uk KerryAnne.Aitken@dumgal.gov.uk Tel: 030 33 33 3000
Dundee City Council	housing.options@dundeecity.gov.uk ; Ross.Lyons@dundeecity.gov.uk ; Sarah.Paterson@dundeecity.gov.uk Tel: 0800 633 5843 (Homeless/Housing Options)
East Ayrshire Council	HOMELESSNESS@east-ayrshire.gov.uk Tel: 01563 554400, option 4
East Dunbartonshire Council	homelessness@eastdunbarton.gov.uk Tel: 0141 578 2133
East Lothian Council	Homelessness@eastLothian.gov.uk Tel: 01620 827536
East Renfrewshire Council	housingAdvice@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk Tracy.Lindsay@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk Tel: 0141 577 3001
Edinburgh City Council	HousingSOLO@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel: 0131 529 5105
Falkirk Council	Prisonoutreachenquiries@falkirk.gov.uk Tel: 01324 503600
Fife Council	PPT.Housing@fife.gov.uk Tel: Housing advice – 03451 550033 and out of hours 0800 028 6231
Glasgow City Council	prisonct@glasgow.gov.uk Tel: 0141 770 2130
Highland Council	housing.shore@highland.gov.uk Tel: 01349 886602
Inverclyde Council	homelessness.services@inverclyde.gov.uk Tel: 01475 558125
Midlothian Council	Homelessness.Enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk Tel: 0131 271 3397
Moray Council	Housing.options@moray.gov.uk Tel: 0300 1234566
North Ayrshire Council	housinghmpenquiries@north-ayrshire.gov.uk Tel: 01294 314600
North Lanarkshire Council	Housing.SPS@northlan.gov.uk Tel: 01698 274632
Orkney Islands Council	lesley@.mulraine@orkney.gov.uk Tel: 01856 873535 x 2177
Perth and Kinross Council	SCT@pkc.gov.uk housingoptionsandsupport@pkc.gov.uk Tel: 01737 476000 or out of hours 0800 917 0708
Renfrewshire Council	prisonreferrals.hps@renfrewshire.gov.uk Tel: 0141 618 5586/0141 618 5806
Scottish Borders Council	homelessnessservices@scotborders.gov.uk Tel: 01896 661385
Shetland Islands Council	housing.mbg@shetland.gov.uk George.Martin@shetland.gov.uk Ruby.Whelan2@shetland.gov.uk Tel: 01595 744 378
South Ayrshire Council	housingoptionsteam@south-ayrshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 123 0900
South Lanarkshire Council	hroenviroscanning@southlanarkshire.gov.uk Tel: 0141 584 2716

Local Authority	Housing Options Contacts
Stirling Council	JusticePrisonInfo@stirling.gov.uk leitchl@stirling.gov.uk Tel: 01786 237900
West Dunbartonshire Council	homeless.prison.referrals@west-dunbarton.gov.uk Tel: 01389 776 951
West Lothian Council	customer.services@westlothian.gov.uk 01506 280000 Homeless duty officer 01506 281588

Annex F: SHORE Strategic Oversight Group membership organisations

SPS

Scottish Government

COSLA

ALACHO

SOLACE

Aberdeenshire Council

Argyll and Bute Council

Angus Council

East Lothian Council

Dundee City Council

Fife Council

Stirling Council

Scottish Borders Council

South Lanarkshire Council

West Dunbartonshire Council

West Lothian Council

Community Justice Scotland

Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum

Social Work Scotland

Homeless Network Scotland

Annex G: Document Version Control

Version	Date of publication	Who	Update Comment
1.0		Strategic Oversight Group	Refresh of standards to include update of legislation, and restructuring of document.