



15 September 2025

Dear Applicant

Our Ref: FOI 889

Your request for information received on 06 August 2025 has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Request

I was wondering if you could answer a number of questions regarding the rehousing of prisoners on their release?

- 1. What are the guidelines for determining where a prisoner is rehoused if necessary?*
- 2. How many premises does the NIHE have for this purpose?*
- 3. How many prisoners have been rehoused in Fermanagh and South Tyrone since 2020?*
- 4. How often are these properties inspected or monitored, if at all?*

Clarification: provide figures for both permanent and temporary

Our response

- 1. What are the guidelines for determining where a prisoner is rehoused if necessary?**

Chapter 2 of the Housing Policy Guidance Manual is regarding Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland (PPANI) and Dealing with Applications from Persons who are PPANI Eligible. This provides guidance for staff, relevant to their role within the Housing Executive in dealing with applicants who have received a custodial sentence or a suspended sentence in respect of a "relevant offence" or who have been charged with a "relevant offence" which could attract a custodial sentence, who are affected by Rules 62-67 of the Housing Selection Scheme. These Rules allows a participating landlord to restrict offers of accommodation and advises staff on the steps to take to restrict temporary accommodation.

You can access a full copy of this guidance using [this link](#).

Please be advised that this guidance is only applicable to those who are PPANI eligible, such as applicants convicted or charged with the sexual abuse of children.

This guidance is not applicable to 'prisoners' in a wider sense, where this is assumed to refer to any persons currently serving or previously having served a custodial sentence for any other reasons.

The Housing Executive does not have specific guidance applicable to 'prisoners' in a general sense regarding temporary accommodation placements. If an applicant is eligible and convictions are spent and not PPANI eligible there will be no additional guidelines or restrictions applied in respect of temporary accommodation.

When considering applications for permanent rehousing under the Housing Selection Scheme there are eligibility criteria which must be met. The person must not be guilty of an unacceptable behaviour which makes them unsuitable to be a tenant. It should be emphasised that the behaviour must have been located in an around their home and that the standard is that the Housing Executive must be convinced it would have obtained a possession order (had they been a tenant) against the person from the courts because the behaviour was so serious. In addition, there must be a belief that the behaviour is likely to continue. Once a person is deemed eligible for housing there is no ability to place restrictions on them in terms of where they wish to be rehoused (save for those special arrangements for certain offenders under PPANI discussed above).

2. How many premises does the NIHE have for this purpose?

The Housing Executive has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation to homeless applicants under the Housing (NI) Order 1988. This duty is met through a range of options including Housing Executive and voluntary sector hostels, units from within the Private Sector such as Dispersed Intensively Managed Emergency Accommodation (DIME) and single lets, as well as non-standard accommodation such as hotels and B&Bs, which are used only in the absence of other options, and for as short a duration as possible.

The Housing Executive may utilise any of these options when providing temporary accommodation to homeless applicants who have previously served a custodial sentence. The Housing Executive will take into account any support needs which may arise from an applicant's offending history as appropriate when determining the suitability of temporary accommodation offered, including any restrictions applicable to applicants subject to PPANI.

The Supporting People (SP) Programme, which is administered by the Housing Executive on behalf of the Department for Communities, provides grant funding

for the provision of housing support services, to enable vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in the community.

The SP programme is focused on four thematic areas; working with people who are experiencing homelessness, young people, older people and people with a disability (including mental health and learning disabilities). Housing related support within the homeless thematic area includes provision through short-term accommodation-based services for those in housing need. This provision includes Approved Premises.

The SP Programme provides grant funding to 4 Approved Premises for 'Offenders or People at risk of Offending' and to 3 services for 'Single Homeless with Support Needs' which have a number of approved beds.

3. How many prisoners have been rehoused in Fermanagh and South Tyrone since 2020?

The Housing Executive have made 4 allocations to applicants with an established homelessness reason of "release from prison", in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone Parliamentary Constituency between the 1st April 2020 and the 31st March 2025.

Please note that 'prisoner' is not a reportable category in the Housing Executive's waiting list/allocation dataset.

4. How often are these properties inspected or monitored, if at all?

The regularity of inspections/ monitoring of temporary accommodation premises is dependent on numerous factors, including the type of accommodation provided, the duration of placement, and the support needs of the applicant, for example.

SP undertake contract management activities. These include annual meetings with provider organisations to discuss key issues, as well as quality monitoring to assess services and ensure the effective delivery of housing-related support. Each service is subject to quality monitoring every three to five years, or earlier if necessary.

Please note the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) is an independent body that inspects and reports on Northern Ireland's criminal justice system, including Approved Premises.

This concludes our response.