

Public safety boost with more secure accommodation for prison leavers

- 200 more beds means closer supervision of an extra 1,700 prison leavers each year
- extra £10 million on refurbishment to bolster security
- spending on construction and renovation work to directly support local tradespeople
- police back plans to make the public safer

Commonly known as probation hostels, approved premises (APs) provide a temporary, yet vital base for offenders upon release – allowing probation staff to closely monitor and support them in the community and boosting public safety. APs are staffed all day, every day by trained probation staff and offenders living there are subject to night-time curfews and regular drug and alcohol testing.

An extra 200 new bedrooms will be created by extending and reconfiguring existing approved premises – an increase in places of 10 per cent. By providing stable accommodation to prison leavers, APs help lower the risk of reoffending and, in turn, reduce crime rates.

A further £10 million will be spent on refurbishments and security, including upgraded CCTV systems and personal alarms for staff.

The construction and renovations will generate millions of pounds in work this year for tradespeople across England and Wales, from plumbers and electricians to roofers and builders.

Prisons and Probation Minister Lucy Frazer QC MP said:

Approved Premises are vital for monitoring prison leavers – reducing the likelihood of them reoffending and helping to cut crime. They provide a stable base helping them access services, find jobs and start to turn their lives around.

This extra investment in building and renovation, along with the improvements we're already making to prisons and courts, will also put millions of pounds into the pockets of local tradespeople across the country.

The plans have also been welcomed by police chiefs, who work closely with the Probation Service to manage high-risk prison leavers in the community.

National Police Chiefs' Council lead for the Management of Offenders, Chief Constable Michelle Skeer, said:

The UK has some of the most effective tools in the world to manage offenders when they are initially released from prison. It is a joined up effort across many services and agencies and the police work very closely to reduce risk.

Approved Premises play a vital role in offering stability, support and supervision that helps prevent reoffending, which ultimately keeps the public safer.

In partnership with the local council, we are also building a new, replacement approved premise in Southwark, which will be open in early 2021 and house 24 prison leavers at any given time.

Offenders will have the chance to carry out some of the renovation work through a Handyman Scheme, helping them learn new skills and boost their chances of finding a job. A trial at St Catherine's approved premises in Guildford, saw an offender shadow local builders when they renovated its kitchen, residents' lounge and bedrooms. The project gave him a new-found focus and confidence, and could inspired offenders to seek work in construction.

The scheme follows swiftly on from plans to [recruit 1,000 new probation officers](#) this year to further boost public safety. Probation officer numbers are now approaching a 4 year high.