



Meg Hillier MP
House of Commons
London
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Dear Meg,

INVESTMENT IN ACCOMMODATION FOR PRISON LEAVERS TO CUT CRIME BY REDUCING REOFFENDING

Today we announced a £50 million new investment to reduce crime and improve public safety by tackling some of the key drivers of reoffending. The majority of this funding will be spent on temporary accommodation for prison leavers at risk of homelessness and investment in Approved Premises to enable closer supervision of the highest risk prisoners after their release from prison.

Tackling crime is a top priority for this Government. In 2018/19, around 80% of those convicted or cautioned had already received at least one previous conviction or caution. Therefore, in order to tackle crime, we must reduce reoffending by addressing the underlying root causes of crime. Our Sentencing White Paper, *A Smarter Approach to Sentencing*, set out our priorities in addressing reoffending as accommodation, employment and substance misuse treatment for prison leavers, and today I am writing with an update on how we will take forward our work on accommodation.

Getting prison leavers into accommodation is key because it provides a strong foundation for individuals to access treatment for addictions and mental health problems if they need it, find work and access other services that will support them to turn their backs on crime. It also enables better management of offenders back into the community in a way which maximises public protection. Findings from a report published by HMIP in 2020 showed that for service users released to settled accommodation, the percentage recalled or resentenced to custody was almost half than of those without such accommodation on release.

The £50 million package reflects a primary focus on accommodation for prison leavers but also includes funding to test innovative new approaches to improving rehabilitative support in custody. The package comprises of:

- At least £23m of funding to go towards the Government's plans to build 200 new spaces in Approved Premises. This will allow probation staff to closely monitor and support the highest-risk offenders in the community by funding new training for staff, increased security, and important repairs and maintenance. The expansion will see an extra 1,700 prison leavers receive closer supervision each year which is critical to improve public protection.

- Around £20m to be invested in supporting prison leavers at risk of homelessness into temporary basic accommodation for up to 12 weeks, giving them the foundation for a crime-free life. Launching in five out of the 12 probation regions in England and Wales, (the East of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, Greater Manchester, Kent, Surrey and Sussex and North West regions) it will support around 3,000 offenders in its first year. While there, offenders will be supported to move into settled accommodation.
- Investment in dedicated staff across at least 11 prisons to provide additional support to prisoners so that they are better prepared to access accommodation, healthcare and employment support services on release. These prisons will also rapidly implement and test a number of new, innovative approaches for improving rehabilitation in custody and rollout the successful ones to the rest of the estate.

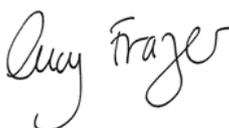
This £50 million package dovetails with the £20 million investment into the Prison Leavers Project, totalling up to £70 million overall. This project will bring together organisations and stakeholders across the system to test innovative ways to support prison leavers to reintegrate into society and reduce reoffending. The project will develop, test and evaluate new cross-sector interventions; fund and support local leaders and agencies to improve join-up of local services; and stimulate tech-based solutions to these challenges from small businesses and start-ups.

This is the latest part of this Government's work to tackle the root causes of crime, demonstrating a significant commitment to reducing reoffending. Last week the Home Secretary and Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced a £148 million investment to combat illegal drugs and provide substance misuse treatment. This investment takes a system-wide approach by giving extra resources to law enforcement to tackle the supply of drugs and at the same time, it delivers more money for drug treatment and recovery to help break the cycle of misuse and reoffending. This includes £80 million spent on expanding substance misuse treatment services to support the recovery of prison leavers with drug and alcohol addictions.

The £80 million investment will provide more specialist staff to deliver targeted support for prison leavers with substance misuse needs, as well as giving more scope to judges to refer offenders to these services. This is part of the Community Sentence Treatment Requirement (CSTR) Programme's drive to increase take up of community sentences with requirements to attend drug and alcohol treatment. The Programme currently operates in courts in 14 areas of England but will be increased to a further 8 by April 2021. Evidence shows there are a wide range of drug and alcohol interventions that can help to reduce reoffending, which is why investing in this initiative will help reduce demand for illicit substances and divert people away from their addictions, ultimately making them less likely to commit further crimes.

Together, this additional £220 million investment represents a gear shift in the Government's approach to tackling crime and demonstrates its commitment to tackling the drivers of reoffending and giving those that come into contact with the Criminal Justice System the tools they need to turn their lives around and desist from crime.

Yours sincerely



LUCY FRAZER QC MP