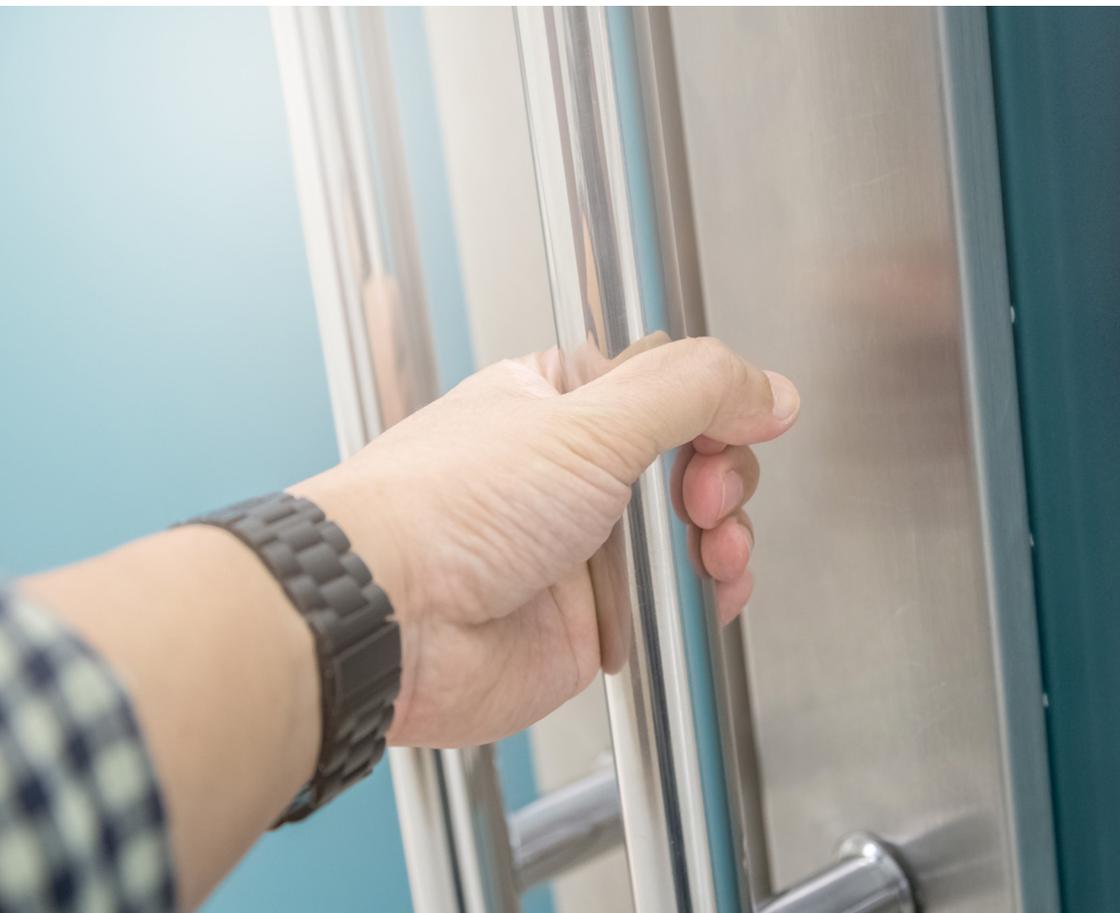




trailblazer devon

A Homelessness Prevention Partnership



Leaving Institutions

(Care leavers, hospital discharge, the military, prison)

A step-by-step guide

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Trailblazer Devon is part of the Department of Communities and Local Government Trailblazer initiative, delivered in partnership with: Exeter City Council, East Devon District Council, Teignbridge District Council, Mid Devon District Council, Julian House, Citizens Advice Exeter and St. Petrock's.



INTRODUCTION

Leaving an institution (hospital, care, prison or the military) can be a daunting prospect for many people. Your life outside of a familiar place will be very different in ways that you may not first expect.

This guide will make you aware of the action you need to take and the things you need to think about now. It contains basic advice, links to further information (locally and nationally), and a section on common myths about what happens when you leave an institution such as a hospital, care, prison or the military.

While written for people who have just left an institution, this guide can also provide information and advice to people who have been living in communities that are new to them for many years beforehand.

THE TRAILBLAZER DEVON PARTNERSHIP

The guide has been produced by Trailblazer Devon, which is a Government-funded initiative to help prevent homelessness across Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon and Teignbridge.

Trailblazer Devon is a partnership between Exeter City Council, East Devon District Council, Teignbridge District Council, Mid Devon District Council, Julian House, Citizens Advice Exeter and St Petrock's.

Disclaimer

Date of publication: May 2018

This booklet has been produced on behalf of Trailblazer Devon by Citizens Advice Exeter.

All the information was correct at the time of publication. It contains links to external websites, and while every effort has been made to ensure these are accurate, Citizens Advice Exeter and Trailblazer Devon cannot be held responsible for any information on these sites. For up-to-date advice and information visit <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>



USING THIS GUIDE

This step-by-step guide has been written to give you initial advice and information about many different aspects of leaving institutions.

We want as many people as possible to benefit from the guide, so we have kept information general and broad. If you find that you need more detail on particular areas of information, please follow the links provided in each section or at the back of this booklet.

Alternatively, please visit the Trailblazer Devon website by visiting www.trailblazerdevon.org.uk to find the contact details of organisations that may be able to help you.

If you do not have access to the internet, please see the links sections at the back of this booklet for telephone numbers of organisations that may be able to help with settling in to a new community after leaving an institution.

LEAVING INSTITUTIONS: STEP-BY-STEP INFORMATION

We understand that the information you need about leaving an institution differs significantly depending on your personal circumstances and the type of institution you are leaving. This booklet gives broad advice and information about four types of institutions that people most commonly leave. These four institutions are:

- Section 1: Care Leavers
- Section 2: Hospital Discharge
- Section 3: Leaving the Military
- Section 4: Discharge from Prison

Throughout the information provided in each section we have provided web links to where you can access further sources of advice and support from a range of organisations.



SECTION 1: CARE LEAVERS

If you are leaving care the world may feel a little daunting, moving on to independence can be a big change. But you are not alone, or expected to face new challenges alone, there are lots of services out there which are designed to help you.

Devon County Council has an obligation to look after children who are in care and ensure a smooth transition when they are leaving care.

When you are 16 years old you will be appointed a Personal Advisor who, along with social services, will support you to make the transition to independence.

The Care Leavers Team provides services for young people leaving care to make sure that they are properly supported, both practically and emotionally.

The team works with young people aged over 16, living in and leaving care, and continue to support them until they are 21, or 25 if they are in education.

Visit the website at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/young-people/children-in-care>

Stand up and Speak up

If you are in care or a care leaver you can go to the website to find out about Devon's Children in Care Council and how you can have a say on issues that affect you. There is also lots of useful information, films for you to watch and games. (<https://www.standupspeakup.org.uk/>)

There is lots of information about the support available to you when it comes time for you to leave care, including a downloadable guide <https://www.standupspeakup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/A4-young-peoples-care-guide-INTERACTIVE-30-9-2016.pdf>

How much support will I receive?

The type of support and service you receive on leaving care will depend on your eligibility. This is quite a complicated area, although recent legislation has changed and Children's Services should offer help to all Care Leavers up to the age of 21 - even if they are not in education.

For a step by step guide to support visit <http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/young-peoples-zone/am-i-care-leaver>, or call tel: 0808 800 5792

How long will I receive support for?

If you are leaving care you should receive support until you are 21 years old, or 25 years old if you are in education or training.



What sort of accommodation will I live in?

There are many different types of accommodation available to you, and you should work with your Personal Advisor or social worker to explore your options and what level of support you require. Some care leavers live in individual flats or houses with very limited support. Your options may include:

- Staying with your foster carers – you may not feel ready to move out and if your carers wish to continue the placement, this may be an option which is available to you.
- Supported accommodation - These are normally small flats in a bigger building with staff on site. They are able to offer you support if and when you need it. You will eventually move on from this type of accommodation, but they can be a useful step to full independence.
- Private rented sector supported accommodation – different types of tenancy may be offered to you, normally the landlord will require one month's rent and a deposit in advance. You may be eligible for help with paying this.

Guarantor Scheme

Sometimes when you rent privately you need a guarantor, someone who vouches for you legally and agrees to be responsible for your rental costs if you fail to make payments. Devon County Council can assess whether you can cope financially and emotionally and be responsible for your own accommodation. If the assessment advises that you are ready and able, Devon County Council, as your corporate parent, will act as guarantor.

When you are at risk of homelessness

Devon County Council must provide accommodation for you up to the age of 18 and your local housing department should help you find a place to live after your 18th birthday (your PA should support you with this).

As a care leaver you are automatically classed as a 'priority need' until your 21st birthday. The council will check that you have not made yourself 'intentionally homeless', this means that you have left accommodation that you could have stayed in, but chose not to.

The council still has to house you in the short term if you have made yourself intentionally homeless, but this may not be settled accommodation and there is likely to be little choice.

Visit the Shelter website for more information about 'intentional homelessness': https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness/rules/intentionally_homeless



Helpful organisations

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

As a care leaver you can contact NYAS directly, they can offer confidential advice, support and guidance to help you get your voice heard. NYAS are independent and not part of Devon County Council. Visit the website at <https://www.nyas.net/>, call 0808 808 1001, or email help@nyas.net

Devon Information Advice and Support

If you have a special educational need or a disability, or are in the process of moving from Children's Services to Adult's Services DIAS can help you with independent advice, support, guidance and advocacy. Visit the website at www.devonias.org.uk/children-young-people, call 01392 383080, or email devonias@devon.gov.uk

Young Devon

Young Devon works to support young people with a range of services. It has a number of services to support young people leaving care, including a supported lodgings scheme and a supported housing scheme. Visit the website at <http://www.youngdevon.org/youth/housing>

Young People's Housing Advice

The website has information relating to the area that you live in, including Exeter, East and Mid Devon and Teignbridge. Visit the website at <http://www.yhdevon.co.uk/>

Julian House – Nightstop Devon

This website has information relating to same day emergency overnight accommodation for young homeless people aged between 16-25. Visit the website at <https://www.julianhouse.org.uk/projects-and-services/homeless-services/nightstop.htm>



SECTION 2: HOSPITAL DISCHARGE

When you leave hospital after a long stay the outside world may feel daunting to you. You may have spent a long time being cared for and you may not feel completely ready to face day-to-day life.

There are many organisations and charities who work to support people following a stay in hospital.

Putting support in place while you are in hospital

If you have spent time being treated in hospital, whether for a planned or an emergency stay, you may be concerned about how you'll cope when you leave.

All hospitals are obliged to ensure that you are not sent home until:

- agreed support is in place
- any services you require are ready to start
- any necessary home adaptations have been made
- appropriate equipment has been delivered or installed.

For more information visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support/hospital-discharge-care/>

You may find it helpful to get support from your hospital's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

The links to the following services are here at RD&E Exeter (<http://www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/help/pals.html>), but for community

hospitals visit <http://www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/services/community-hospitals/exmouth-hospital.html>

Being discharged from hospital

You'll usually be given an estimated date of discharge within 24 to 48 hours of being admitted to hospital. Your progress will be reviewed and, if there's likely to be a change to your discharge date, you should be kept updated.

The person co-ordinating your discharge should be available each day, and you should be given their name and details of how to contact them.

You may be transferred to a community hospital once you have been treated in Exeter. You may meet the criteria for hospital transport, or be expected to make your own way there.

Hospital at home

If you live in Exmouth or Budleigh Salterton you may be eligible for the Hospital at Home project which provides active treatment by health and social care staff, for a limited period of time, in the homes of patients whose condition would otherwise call for in-patient admission. It also enables earlier discharge from the RD&E and the two community hospitals. It also covers people living in care homes.

Patients are either referred directly by their GP or are transferred from the RD&E following screening by the care of the elderly consultant who oversees the team.



The Mid Devon Pathways Project

This project, which operates in Cullompton, Tiverton, CREDITON, Moretonhampstead and Okehampton was developed with staff and GPs to prevent hospital admission and promote timely discharge, using defined pathways to make sure patients were cared for at home wherever possible.

The team also works closely with hospital discharge facilitators covering Tiverton, CREDITON, Moretonhampstead and Okehampton community hospitals and trainee assistant practitioners.

Hospital discharge assessments

A discharge assessment looks at the needs you are likely to have when you're discharged or transferred from hospital.

Once staff have established that you are eligible for help they will ensure support, services and any adaptations required to your home are ready for you before you are discharged.

You should be fully involved in the assessment, and with your permission, any family carers will also be kept informed and given the opportunity to contribute.

Will I have home support?

A care plan will be drawn up, detailing the health and social care support you need after you leave hospital. You should be fully involved in making this plan. The care plan should include:

- the treatment and support you will get when you're discharged
- who will be responsible for providing support, and how to contact them
- when, and how often, support will be provided
- how the support will be monitored and reviewed
- the name of the person who is co-ordinating the care plan
- who to contact if there's an emergency or if things don't work as they should
- information about any charges (if applicable)

How will hospital staff prepare me for discharge?

Before you leave the hospital, the member of staff responsible for your discharge should make sure:

- you have clothes to go home in, money and front door keys
- there's someone collecting you, or a taxi or hospital transport has been booked
- you (and a carer if you have one) have a copy of your care plan
- you and/or your carer understand any new medicines you've been given and you have a supply to take home
- you've been shown how to use any equipment, aids or adaptations you need



- you have incontinence products if you need them
- your GP knows about your discharge and any help you need from a district nurse has been arranged
- If you're being discharged to a care home, the care home should also be told the date and time of your discharge, and have a copy of your care plan.

Intermediate care

You may feel uncertain about going to live in a care home permanently after a stay in hospital. Enquire about the possibility of intermediate care or re-ablement services.

Intermediate care (or re-ablement) is short-term care that's provided free if you no longer need to be in hospital but you may need extra support to help your recovery. It lasts for up to six weeks and can be provided in your home or in a residential setting.

When your period of intermediate care finishes, you'll be assessed to see whether you need any ongoing social care or NHS support.

After discharge from hospital

Your care should be monitored and reviewed as set out in your care plan. The care plan should also include details of who to contact if things don't work as planned.

If your care plan includes community care services from a local authority, it should include provision to check that their care package is working well within two weeks of your discharge. If you live alone,

this should take place within the first few days of discharge. Following this, your care plan should be reviewed at least annually.

Devon County Council offers social care and health information advice and support on its website, including information about help after leaving hospital, visit <https://new.devon.gov.uk/care-and-health>, contact Care Direct on 0345 1551 007 or email csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk

Bay6

Bay6 is a project run by the charity Julian House which works with the RD&E Hospital Exeter to offer advice and support to patients who find themselves at risk of homelessness.

The charity can support people in emergency situations and then provide longer term support for them to move on to longer term accommodation.

People can find themselves homeless for a number of reasons, so in addition to supporting rough sleepers and people with experience of homelessness the project also helps a wide range of patients who have never experienced homelessness. Visit <https://www.julianhouse.org.uk/projects-and-services/homeless-services/homeless-prevention/bay-6.htm> or call 01392 430228.



Care for older people

Age UK offers help, support and advice for older people. For specific advice for older people leaving hospital, call 0800 055 6112 or visit <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/health-services/leaving-hospital/>

You can also find your local branch of Age UK, who can help you once you have left hospital, by visiting www.ageuk.org.uk.

Leaving hospital after a mental health crisis

Whether you've been in hospital for days or months, you need the right care and support to recover and get your life back on track. Mental Health Services should check on you within seven days of discharge (or 48 hours when someone is at greater risk). Organisations to turn to for this support:

Mind works to support people with mental health problems. Visit their website <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/legal-rights/leaving-hospital/#.WuF6PbQ-fBI>

The Devon NHS Partnership Trust offers advice and guidance on its website <https://www.dpt.nhs.uk/our-services>

SECTION 3: LEAVING THE MILITARY

When you are planning to leave the military you should begin the process at least nine months before your termination date. Your regiment will have support in place to prepare you for life on 'civvy street'.

There is a handy service leaver's guide on the gov.uk website which will take you step by step through the transition process https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/703777/Service_Leavers_Guide_April_2018.pdf

For a wide range of information for veterans, visit the gov.uk website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>

For urgent help in a crisis call the Veterans UK helpline on 0808 1914 218 or visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/urgent-help-for-veterans-in-a-crisis/urgent-help-for-veterans-in-a-crisis>

Beginning the process

All units have their own 'terminating routine'. You will need to make contact with your Regimental Career Management Office (or similar) at your unit to officially begin the process.



Agencies involved in the delivery of advice, training and jobs:

- Civvy Street is The Royal British Legion's employability site. It is designed to support you and your family in your civilian careers. It is an online service that is available to you whether you are currently in the Armed Forces and are planning your future civilian career or whether you have already served and are looking for qualifications, funding or a new job. Visit <https://www.civvystreet.org>
- The Career Transition Partnership (CTP) provides resettlement services for those leaving the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and Marines. Regardless of time served, all members of the Armed Forces can benefit from CTP support when leaving Service. Visit <https://www.ctp.org.uk/>
- Quest Online offers the latest information on education, resettlement and recruitment for all ranks of serving officers and veterans. Visit <https://www.questonline.co.uk/>
- The Officers' Association works with both serving and former officers and reservists from across the Armed Forces and their families. Visit <https://www.officersassociation.org.uk/>

Medical support

A full medical exam is required before you leave. This should be carried out three months before your last day of service. Don't forget that you'll need to register with a GP and find a dentist wherever you settle after you leave.

To find services near you visit <https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4>. It is important that you tell your GP that you have served as this will entitle you to benefit from veteran-specific services, such as prosthetics and mental health.

To find a dentist visit <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/dentists/Pages/find-an-NHS-dentist.aspx>

Leaving MOD accommodation

The Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO) is a tri-service focal point for civilian housing information for service personnel and their families wishing to move to civilian accommodation.

The organisation holds housing briefs which are designed to give you information to help you make informed choices about your civilian housing.

For information visit the JSHAO website www.gov.uk/jshao



Affordable Home Ownership Schemes

Service personnel (and ex-service personnel within 24 months of discharge in England and Wales and 24 Scotland) have priority status with regard to Government Affordable Housing Schemes. These include Forces Help to Buy, shared ownership and shared equity loans. For more information visit www.gov.uk/jshao

Where to get advice

Citizens Advice has information on housing options for veterans and their families who are looking for somewhere to live. Visit the website at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/finding-a-place-to-live/housing-options-for-people-leaving-the-armed-forces-veterans-and-their-families/> or contact your local Citizens Advice office. Contact details on page 39.

Help in a crisis

Veterans Aid's activities are focussed on helping ex-servicemen and women in crisis. It specifically deals with all the factors that contribute to crisis and those leading to homelessness. Call free on 0800 012 6867 or visit <https://veterans-aid.net/>

Educational support

The Armed Forces Learning Credits Scheme helps support personal development. The scheme funds both small scale learning and offers help with gaining further, or higher education qualifications through Enhanced Learning Credits (ELC). You can continue to claim ELC up to five years after leaving the forces.

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Your pension rights

The Armed Forces Pension Society can help guide you through the complex pension maze and campaign against injustices. It also sits on the MoD Pensions Board and on the Public Sector Pensioners Council representing its members' interests. Visit <https://forcespensionsociety.org/>

The Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion provides lifelong support for the Armed Forces community – serving men and women, veterans and their families.

Visit www.britishlegion.org.uk or call the Freephone helpline on 0808 802 8080

Other charities and organisations which offer support include:

- <https://blesma.org/>
- <https://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/>
- <https://www.blindveterans.org.uk/>
- <https://www.ssafa.org.uk>
- <https://www.combatstress.org.uk/>
- <http://www.veteranscharity.org.uk/>
- <https://www.soldierscharity.org/>
- <http://veteransassociationuk.co.uk/>
- <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/>
- <http://www.buildingheroes.org.uk/>
- <https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk/>

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Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) Forces Help

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) Forces Help is the national charity providing lifelong support to anyone who is currently serving or has ever served in the Royal Navy, British Army or Royal Air Force, as well as the spouses, ex-spouses, widows and widowers, and dependents of those who have served.

It acts as a case working charity between client and service benevolent funds to raise funds for particular needs and signpost on to other relevant organisations where necessary.

It can help with: clothing on release; finding somewhere to live on release; essential items; rent deposit; managing debts; travel and expenses.

SSAFA is also committed to providing serving personnel and veterans in custody and their families with lifelong support, however their circumstances may have changed. For those in the criminal justice system it can also help:

- veterans whilst they are in custody
- families of veterans whilst they are in custody
- veterans and their families on release

If you are a veteran in custody and would like SSAFA's assistance, speak to your Veterans in Custody Support (VICS) Officer to find out how to get support from SSAFA's Prison In-reach service. If you do not have a VICS Officer, contact SSAFA's welfare team for details of the Prison In-reach caseworker who covers your prison.

Visit <https://www.ssafa.org.uk> or call 0800 731 4880.

To contact the Devon branch of the SSAFA visit <https://www.ssafa.org.uk/devon>

Devon Forces Family

Devon Forces Family provides information for anyone who has ever served in any branch of the armed forces and is now living in Devon, or is planning to move here.

Support is available for all members of the military community, including people getting ready to leave the forces, recent service leavers, older veterans and family members. This also includes members and ex-members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary who are now recognised as part of the Royal Naval Service.

Visit <http://www.devonforcesfamily.org.uk/>

Veterans Peer Support

The Devon-based group supports former and current Armed Forces Personnel and their families, suffering with, and from, the effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and associated mental health problems. The group holds regular drop-in sessions for its members. (<http://www.veteranspeersupport.co.uk/>)



Your mental health

The Devon Partnership Trust Veterans Mental Health Service supports veterans who are concerned about their mental health. The service provides a first point of contact for people aged 18 and over and is available to anyone who has completed one day's service or more with the British Armed Forces. For veterans accessing the services, they must:

- be a resident in England
- have served in the UK armed forces for a full day
- be registered with a GP practice in England or be willing to register with a GP
- be able to provide their military service number or another form of acceptable proof of eligibility

People meeting the criteria can self-refer or request referral via a health care professional or service charity. Telephone 01392 207799 or email dpn-tr.veterans@nhs.net

For more information visit <https://www.dpt.nhs.uk/our-services/veterans>

SECTION 4: DISCHARGE FROM PRISON

Leaving prison can feel daunting, whether you have served a long or a short sentence. There are a number of services and charities who work to support offenders and help them adjust.

Visit the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website for links to organisations who support prisoners: <https://www.gov.uk/leaving-prison/support-when-someone-leaves-prison>

If you are concerned you will be homeless on release

Family and friends

Most people leaving prison return to family or friends, at least in the short term. If your relationships with family and friends have broken down, it is possible to rebuild bridges, perhaps with the help of prison staff. It is very difficult to secure housing on release as waiting lists are long, so it is very important not to dismiss this as an option.



Emergency housing options

If you need somewhere to stay in an emergency, your options include:

- Registering as homeless with your local council (contact details page 40)
- Night shelters
- Direct access hostels
- Bed and breakfast accommodation
- Visiting a day centre for help and further advice

Call the Nacro Resettlement Advice Service on 0300 123 1999 for advice.

Finding somewhere to live

It can be difficult to find somewhere to live in time for your release as many housing providers have long waiting lists. There should be advice and support available in your prison.

- Make sure you start making enquiries at least six months before your release date (or if you are serving a short sentence, as far in advance of your release as possible).

- Contact Nacro on 0800 0181 259 (from prison) or ask a family member or friend to contact Nacro on 0300 123 1999 for information on your housing options.

- Find out who is responsible for providing you with housing advice and support in the prison and try to make an appointment. They will try to see you as soon as they can, but it may take some time.

- Contact your local council. Contact details on page 40

For more information visit <https://www.nacro.org.uk/resettlement-advice-service/support-for-individuals/housing/advice-on-release-from-prison/#council>

Before you are released

You will set up a support plan which will enable you to secure accommodation and housing benefit and help with training and/or finding employment.

Financial support

You may be concerned about how you will manage financially once you leave prison. HMPPS aims to ensure that all prisoners who need one have the possibility of registering for a bank account ahead of their release.

The six largest commercial banks in the UK work with HMPPS to provide a special scheme for prisons, so that people coming to the



end of their sentence can apply for accounts while in prison. If your application is accepted, you will receive the usual documentation, card, and PIN, which are held with your valuable property until release. With this, you are able to deposit money into the account.

Discharge grant

If you aged 18 or over and in custody for more than 14 days you may be eligible for a 'Discharge' grant. This is money to help pay for necessary living expenses in the period immediately after release and if you are unemployed, before the first benefit payment.

Jobseekers' Allowance

You may be entitled to Jobseekers' Allowance or Universal Credit (depending on where you live) when you are released from prison. Check if you are eligible here: <https://www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance>

If you leave prison and don't have anywhere to live contact Shelter, https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness/your_situation/ex-prisoners_get_help_if_youre_homeless or call the Shelter emergency helpline on 0808 1644 660.

Organisations which offer support to ex-offenders include:

- Nacro (previously known as the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders). Through its Resettlement Advice Service, Nacro offers support and advice regarding access to employment, housing and education to people with criminal records and professionals working with them. They also provide training to employers and organisations about assessing and managing risk in relation to criminal records.
- The Hardman Directory. Visit this directory at <http://www.prisonerfunder.org.uk/> for comprehensive information on funding and support available to you on release from prison.
- Shelter. More than one in seven ex-offenders were homeless prior to prison - and over a third need help finding somewhere to live upon release. Visit the Shelter website for practical advice and support. www.shelter.org.uk
- Unlock is an independent national charity that provides a voice and support for people with convictions who are facing stigma and obstacles because of their criminal record. www.unlock.org.uk



Looking for work

Approaching employers

Looking for a job after leaving prison can be very daunting. You may be concerned that your criminal record will prevent you from being offered a job, or, particularly after a long sentence, that you lack the necessary skills to be employed.

This is likely to be challenging, but there is support out there and there is a growing number of employers who are willing to recruit ex-offenders.

Writing a CV

There is plenty of information online with regards to Curriculum Vitae (CV) writing. Here is a good link with more information: <https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/how-to-write-a-cv/>

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance on learning, training and work opportunities. This can include:

- advice on choosing a career
- help to improve your CV
- support with interview skills
- information on possible sources of funding.

The service offers people confidential and impartial advice to help them plan for their future skills, careers, work and life choices.

Call on 0800 100 900 or visit the website <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>

Clean Sheet

Clean Sheet is a 3-Step Pathway from prison to employment. It operates in partnership with prisons, churches, Job Clubs and voluntary organisations across England. Its aim is to see as many ex-offenders as possible given a second chance, transition to sustainable employment and integrate back into their communities. Visit www.cleansheet.org.uk

Funding to help you train

There are a number of funds available to help you train for a new job. Jobcentre Plus offers a Flexible Support Fund which can be used to 'remove barriers to work' and improve an individual's chances of getting work. The grant can be used for items like clothing or travel expenses for attendance at interviews. Ask your Jobcentre Plus adviser for more information.

The Prisoner's Education Trust (PET) provides grants for distance learning courses to be undertaken while you are serving your sentence. Applications to PET must be made through the prison education department. www.prisonerseducation.org.uk



City & Guilds offers a small number of bursaries (educational awards) each year to anyone, including prisoners, who would like the opportunity to study for a City & Guilds/ Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) qualification. You will need to complete an online registration which will then give you access to the online application form that can be found at www.cityandguilds.com/bursaries. If you don't have access to the online application form, prisoners are able to apply by post.

The Sarum St Michael Educational Charity offers personal grants to applicants who live or study in the Dioceses of Salisbury, Bath & Wells, Bristol, Exeter, Oxford and Winchester. The charity funds a number of courses, including pre-university access courses or Open University courses. The application form can be downloaded from the charity's website. (www.sarumstmichael.org)

Prisoners at HMP/Youth Offender Institution (YOI) Portland can apply for small grants from the Sir John and Lady Heathcoat Amory's Charitable Trust to help with educational courses or equipment. Apply in writing to Sir John and Lady Heathcoat Amory's Charitable Trust, The Island, Lowman Green, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 4LA.

The SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association) provides serving personnel and veterans in custody and their families with lifelong support, however their circumstances may have changed.

The organisation supports: Families of veterans whilst they are in custody; veterans and their families on release and veterans whilst they are in custody. Visit <https://www.ssafa.org.uk/help-you/veterans/support-offenders-and-ex-offenders> for more information.

The Amber Foundation has three residential centres across the South West and in Surrey where it supports young people aged 17 to 30 who are homeless, including those who have been released from prison. Visit www.amberweb.org or call 0800 652 108.



MYTHS BUSTING: LEAVING INSTITUTIONS

There is a lot of information to take on board when leaving an institution. In this section we bust some commonly held myths.

Myth 1: *I'm not given any support in finding accommodation and a job when I leave an institution*

Whether a person is leaving prison, a care leaver or the military they will be given support to help adjust to life outside of the institution. The Citizens Advice website has information about services available for people leaving the military and the GOV.UK website has information about services and support available for people leaving foster or local authority care, and people being released from prison.

Myth 2: *I can't get a job because I have a criminal record*

An employer can't turn someone down for a job because they have been convicted of an offence if the conviction or caution is 'spent' - unless an exception applies. The gov.uk website has more information about 'spent' convictions and the exceptions to this law: <https://www.gov.uk/exoffenders-and-employment>.

Myth 3: *I won't be able to rent a home because I don't have any references*

If you haven't rented a property before and can't give the landlord or letting agent any references you may still be able to rent a property. You should explain to the letting agent or landlord why you are unable

to give references and you can also ask for a 'character reference' which is a letter from your employer or someone who knows you well, to show that you are reliable. You may also be asked for a guarantor to agree to pay the rent if you don't - a guarantor may be your parents, someone else in your family who can be relied upon or a local authority if you are a care leaver.

Myth 4: *I won't be given any support when I leave hospital*

If you are admitted to hospital, planning for what happens when you are discharged should begin on the day you are admitted. A discharge assessment should be completed to identify your support needs after you leave hospital, and should include details of the treatment and support you will receive, who will be providing support, when and for how often, along with other important information. Before you are discharged a member of staff should ensure that you have clothes to wear, money, and your front door keys, information about how you are getting home, and that any adaptations which are necessary have been completed. For more information about the support which people receive when leaving hospital, visit this page on the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support/hospital-discharge-care/>.



FURTHER HELP

Trailblazer Devon provides advice and information to people at times when they need it most. We want people to understand their rights and live as comfortably as possible.

While this booklet provides advice and information, we understand that some people may need further assistance in leaving an institution. In this section, we provide links to organisations that can help you further.

Institutions

Hospital Discharge and Care Leavers

- NHS England - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support/hospital-discharge-care/>
- Devon County Council - <https://new.devon.gov.uk/care-and-health/>
- Bay6 (Julian House) - <https://www.julianhouse.org.uk/projects-and-services/homeless-services/homeless-prevention/bay-6.htm> - 01392 430 228

Military

- SSAFA - <https://www.ssafa.org.uk/devon> - 01392 254 611
- Devon Forces Family - <https://www.devonforcesfamily.org.uk/>

- The Royal British Legion - <http://counties.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/devon>

Prison

- GOV.UK - <https://www.gov.uk/leaving-prison/support-when-someone-leaves-prison>

Get Advice

- Julian House - <https://www.julianhouse.org.uk/> | 01392 430 228
- Citizens Advice - <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/> | 03444 111444
- St Petrock's - <https://stpetrocks.org.uk/> - 01392 422396

Local Authorities

- East Devon District Council - <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/> | 01395 516551
- Exeter City Council - <https://exeter.gov.uk/> | 01392 277888
- Mid Devon District Council - <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/> | 01884 255255
- Teignbridge District Council - <https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/> | 01626 361101



HOUSING PASSPORT – ACCESS TO HOUSING

Even without needing to start life in a new community, renting a home can be difficult for many people.

Sometimes landlords and letting agents need a lot of information (your identity, income and current living arrangements) before they agree to rent a property.

To help with this problem Trailblazers Devon lets people create a permanent “Housing Passport” that they can save.

The Housing Passport lets you build a detailed picture of who you are, where you worked previously, if you volunteer, if you have a family, if you have lived anywhere else and other important details.

Creating a Housing Passport and providing more detail about yourself gives you a better chance of being able to rent a house from a landlord or letting agent.

CREATE YOUR HOUSING PASSPORT

To create your Housing Passport go to: passport.trailblazerdevon.org.uk. Once logged in you will be asked a few questions about yourself.

We recommend taking your time to create your passport and answer questions as carefully and accurately as you can.

All information you provide will be held by Trailblazer Devon and shared with the organisations that are part of this partnership – please read the back page of this booklet for details.





trailblazer devon

A Homelessness Prevention Partnership



Exeter
City Council



Mid
Devon
DISTRICT COUNCIL



Teignbridge
DISTRICT COUNCIL
South Devon

Trailblazer Devon is part of the Department of Communities and Local Government Trailblazer initiative, delivered in partnership with: Exeter City Council, East Devon District Council, Teignbridge District Council, Mid Devon District Council, Julian House, Citizens Advice Exeter and St. Petrock's.



S+PETROCKS

Leaving Institutions

A step-by-step guide