

Prison Discharge/Ex Offenders

If you were recently released from prison, find out about services that could provide practical support and help you find accommodation. You could also apply to East Suffolk Council to make a homeless application.

Help from East Suffolk Council if you are single and homeless

If you apply to the council for housing assistance because you are homeless, the council might not necessarily be legally obliged to provide you with temporary accommodation. Its duty to you might be limited to providing you with advice and assistance and not accommodation after release. For East Suffolk Council to be legally obliged to provide you with accommodation, it will have to be satisfied that you are eligible, homeless, in priority need and that you have not made yourself intentionally homeless.

East Suffolk Council will take into account if you have spent time in prison when deciding how to assess your vulnerabilities, even if it has been some time since you were released.

East Suffolk Council will also look at whether you:

- have a severe and enduring mental health condition
- have a learning disability or physical disability
- are under 21 and have been in care and are under 21
- were in the armed forces

are fleeing violence or threats of violence

Priority need for prisoners and ex-offenders

In some circumstances, East Suffolk Council might decide you are in priority need because you have spent time in prison or on remand.

The council will consider whether you should be regarded as being vulnerable as a result of you being homeless. This has a particular meaning for homelessness applications and is not the same as identified as being vulnerable in prison.

When considering your homelessness application, the Council will look at:

- the length of time you spent in prison
- if any support is being provided by a third party such as the probation service, a youth offending team, or drug and alcohol team
- evidence provided by any third party (including any housing needs assessment) about your homelessness vulnerability
- the period of time since your release from prison and how successful you have been in securing your own accommodation and in retaining that accommodation any support further networks other than professionals such as family, friends
- evidence of any other vulnerability such as mental health, drug and/or alcohol misuse, or being a care leaver
- any other facts to be considered which might impact your ability to find accommodation yourself

The fact that you have been in prison does not in itself mean that East Suffolk Council must treat you as being vulnerable and in priority need for accommodation. East Suffolk Council will need to assess the evidence before it and be satisfied that you will find it difficult to secure and maintain accommodation for yourself compared to other people who find themselves homeless.

Prisoners and ex-offenders treated as intentionally homeless

The council's Housing Needs Team may decide that you are intentionally homeless if you were evicted or left your previous accommodation as a result of criminal or antisocial behaviour or because of rent arrears resulting from your time spent in prison. East Suffolk Council may make the decision that you should have known that your criminal activity could have resulted in you being sent to prison, and that this could lead to the loss of your home.

What area can you be housed in if you are homeless?

When you apply to East Suffolk as homeless, the housing needs team will establish whether you have local connection to the area. Further details on local connection can be found on Shelters website: [Shelter Legal England - Local connection in homelessness applications - Shelter England](#)

Time spent in prison in a specific area does not give you a local connection with the area where the prison is located. However, if you have no local connection with any area or if you are fleeing domestic violence, you can apply to any local authority in England.

There may be restrictions placed on where you can live. For example, your license agreement may have exclusions zones, if the local authority cannot offer assistance you may need to seek help from a different local authority.

Help finding housing in the private rented sector

You could try to find suitable and affordable housing in the private rented sector. East Suffolk Council Housing Needs team will be able to advise you what housing is available locally and how to apply for Universal Credit to help you with your housing costs. The Housing Needs Team can also advise you if there is any financial assistance available to you, and advise you how to apply for this.

Apply for a local authority or housing association home

As a longer term alternative option, you could also consider applying for a local authority a housing association home. Please complete the online housing application at www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk

[Help finding housing from probation services](#)

If you are released from prison on license, your probation officer may help you find accommodation, this may include CAS-3 accommodation or approved premises.

[Housing Needs Service - Contact Information](#)

Please contact us for further advice and support if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness on:

Telephone – 0333 016 2000

Housing.needs@eastsuffolk.gov.uk