



Approved Premises – What are they?

*Answering the questions
you want answered*

Attendance Centres

Q. What is a Hostel?

A. Approved Premises (also known as hostels) are places to live that provide enhanced supervision for offenders who are either serving community penalties, on bail awaiting sentence, or have been released from prison. In Lancashire, the Probation Service has two hostels for male offenders: one in Accrington and one in Blackburn. In total they can accommodate up to 48 offenders.

Q. How secure are they?

A. There are strict rules put into place at both our approved premises, including an overnight curfew with doors being locked at 11:00pm. There is at least two staff on duty 24 hrs a day, 365 days a year to monitor the offenders and take immediate action if the rules are not followed. Some residents also have daytime curfews which are strictly enforced. The majority of residents are able to leave the hostel during the day to access local services such as the post office, library and job centre. Residents are not allowed to have drugs or alcohol on the premises at any time. All offenders are encouraged to take part in activities prescribed by the hostel staff: this may include training programmes to help offenders stop committing further crimes

If offenders do not abide by the rules, they will be sent back to court and/or prison and will lose their place at the hostel.

Q. Are there risks to me or my family's safety?

A. The protection of victims, the public and children, is of the greatest importance to us. Approved premises represent the safest option for supervising high risk offenders in the community. They offer a range of restrictions and controls that are not available in any other community-based facilities. If high risk offenders were not placed at approved premises, they would be living in other types of accommodation with fewer or no controls on their movements and behaviour. Although we can never guarantee that an offender will not re-offend, having them live in approved premises minimises the risk.

Q. Who lives in approved premises?

A. Approved premises accommodate offenders who have committed a wide range of crimes. Approved premises are not specialist accommodation or treatment centres for sex offenders: they hold a wide range of offenders on bail or on licence in the community for whom no other types of accommodation would be suitable.

Q. What happens when an offender leaves a hostel?

A. Whilst living at the hostel, residents are allowed to leave the premises during the day and can access local services such as the post office. Offenders are only allowed to move out of a hostel when they

have completed a comprehensive review and suitable accommodation is found or when their licence has been completed. They are still monitored after they have moved out by probation or the police.

Q. What is a hostel like?

A. Approved premises provide single and shared rooms (with provision for disabled residents) and shared bathroom facilities, residents' lounge, kitchen/ dining facilities, a skills development centre. Whilst in a hostel, offenders undertake courses such as cookery and receive support in trying to gain employment. They also undertake group work and have individual sessions to address their behaviour and reduce the chance of them committing further crime.

Q. What do they do?

A. Hostels help to protect the public by offering enhanced supervision that is far stricter than anywhere else in the community. This is used when offenders cannot return to a location due to victims living there or nearby, or if an offender is judged to require extra supervision upon their release from prison.

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