

# GETTING OUT

# HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is often the biggest worry that people have when being released from custody. A lot of people leave prison not sure of where they will live. Sometimes people need crisis accommodation (often known as 'TA') when they first get out. TA usually means a short period of accommodation in a hotel or a motel. CRC staff are experienced in helping people coming out of prison to navigate TA and access homelessness services, so please call us for help on (02) 9288 8700.



### I am in prison and I don't have anywhere to live when I get out. What should I do?

Talk to a SAPO or case manager or a parole officer about the fact you will be homeless on release. If you are on parole, there are a limited number of short-term transitional beds (usually for up to 12 weeks) that might be options. These beds are in group settings, and have support workers attached who are there to help with reintegration and finding your feet after prison. Most of these services need Community Corrections to make a referral and have quite detailed eligibility criteria so you will need to check this out.

There are also a number of support services (like CRC) who can work with you longer term to try and find some accommodation, but this can be a long-term process so it might well be that you need to find some short-term or crisis accommodation first.

There is a referral program called 'Set to Go' which allows you to book five nights temporary accommodation (TA) before you get out of prison. This used to be just for people on parole, but it is now available for all people in prison. If you are on parole, your community corrections officer should make the referral. If not, ask your SAPO or case manager. Sometimes people working in prisons haven't heard of this program, so you might need to ask a few times! If you can't get anyone inside prison to help you with this, call CRC on (02) 9288 8700 and we can try and work with you to get this organised before you get out.

### What happens if I am released from prison and I am homeless?

Link2Home is the main service for people who don't have a bed for that night. Their number is 1800 152 152. Remember that it can take a long time for someone to answer the phone at Link2Home so it is a good idea to make yourself comfortable before you call. Link2Home can provide TA as well as referral to a casework service. TA can also be accessed through any NSW FACS/Housing office.



### I am in Temporary Accommodation. How long can I stay in temporary accommodation?

Temporary accommodation is usually for 3 nights, with a limit of 28 nights per year. The rules around TA changed during COVID, and people were being granted longer periods of TA and it was easier to extend it. It is a good idea to check with Link2Home directly how many nights TA you currently are able to access. You can always apply to have your time extended in TA if you don't have anywhere to live. To do this you can contact Link2Home by phone, or you can e-mail the local housing office (if you have been given this email). If you have a caseworker, they can also email a support letter for extension of your TA. If you are having problems extending your TA and you don't have anywhere to live, please call CRC on (02)928 88700.

### Is it still possible to inspect a property?

Landlords and agents can still show you the premises after they have made an appointment with you. Before they do this they might ask you questions about your health and how you are feeling. This is to make sure you don't have COVID. They should provide masks and hand sanitiser/wash and ensure you don't touch anything.

### I am sleeping rough. How can I stay safe? What crisis services can help me?

If you are in Central Sydney, you can call Missionbeat on 1800 306 461 and they can help you by transporting you to a crisis service or helping you to access TA. The Department of Communities and Justice has patrols that look for rough sleepers in areas where they often sleep, such as around Central Station/Belmore Park and Martin Place. They will work with you to find accommodation. This is a particularly risky time to be sleeping rough so even if you don't usually like to access Government services, it may be worth giving it a try now.





### Websites and phone numbers for further information

List of all NSW FACS/Housing offices: [www.facs.nsw.gov.au/about/contact/housing/a-z](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/about/contact/housing/a-z)

Renting during COVID-19: [www.tenants.org.au/blog/renting-and-covid-19-information](http://www.tenants.org.au/blog/renting-and-covid-19-information)

Information for rough sleepers: [www.facs.nsw.gov.au/providers/homelessness-services/updates/people-sleeping-rough-and-covid-19-dcj-and-homelessness-sector-response](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/providers/homelessness-services/updates/people-sleeping-rough-and-covid-19-dcj-and-homelessness-sector-response)

Call Link2Home: 1800 152 152.

