

as necessary. The offender's case is discussed in detail at regular meetings. A plan of action is agreed by all agencies to jointly manage the risks the offender poses.

Are schools told where Approved Premises are and who is in them?

All local head teachers are told if there is an Approved Premises within the vicinity of their school. The police, as part of MAPPA, will share information about offenders with head teachers if they think an individual resident poses a specific risk. The police will advise head teachers about whether and how they might share the information with other staff or parents, and who to contact if they have any concerns. All schools should have their own child protection policies.

The children's services, which include education and social care, are key contributions to MAPPA.



Keeping Our Children Safe

Information about Approved Premises (Hostels) and the management of offenders in the community

Keeping Our Children Safe

What are Approved Premises?

Approved Premises are accommodation for offenders approved by the Home Office. They used to be known as probation and bail hostels and are still often referred to as hostels. They are key to our aim of protecting the public from offenders who pose a significant risk of harm to others. There are 104 approved premises in England and Wales providing approximately 2,300 bed spaces. They are run by the National Probation Service or by voluntary sector organisations.

Most approved premises are in towns and cities where residents are close to necessary services such as shops, post offices, Jobcentres, police stations and probation offices. Inevitably they can be close to schools, playgrounds and other public areas used by children and families.

There are always at least two members of staff on duty at any time and stringent security measures are in place, including curfew, CCTV coverage, alarmed exits and restricted window openings. Residents are routinely observed and their behaviour recorded.

Who lives in Approved Premises?

Residents are mainly people who have been released from prison. Some residents are on bail. In a few cases, they are people who have received a community sentence from the court. Most approved premises house some offenders who have served a prison sentence for a violent or sexual offence and are now returning to live in the community. Residents will stay in the hostel until staff judge it is safe to move them into more permanent independent accommodation, usually in the same area.

Are Approved Premises safe?

Approved Premises are the safest option for many offenders as they allow probation staff to manage them more closely. Residents must obey the house rules, such as a curfew, not being under the influence of drink or drugs and not causing any disruption to neighbours and the immediate community. Rooms can also be searched.

Additionally staff ensure that offenders stick to their bail conditions or the terms of their prison licence, which can include an additional curfew (for example requiring them to stay indoors at times when children are most likely to be on the streets) and staying away from places where children meet, such as parks and playgrounds.

All Approved Premises have close links with local police.

What would happen if there were no Approved Premises?

Local communities would be less well protected. Offenders of all kinds, including the most dangerous, would be placed in premises without supervision, such as local authority housing and bed and breakfast accommodation. They would be less tightly monitored and lapses in behaviour would not be spotted as quickly.

Who decides which offenders are placed in Approved Premises?

Almost all residents are placed there by courts or the Parole Board. Approved Premises managers will ultimately decide if someone is suitable for admission.

Do residents pose a threat to the public?

When a place is found at approved premises an assessment is made as to whether the offender poses any risk to the public or themselves. Those who cause particular concern are referred to the local MAPPAs (multi-agency public protection arrangements) MAPPAs are headed jointly by police, probation and prisons with contributions from other agencies, such as health, housing, social services and education,