

## **Prison Referral Agreement**

A Homeless Referral process has been agreed with Porterfield Prison, The Highland Council and Moray Council. It will come into operation on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005.

When an offender goes through their induction process when they first go into prison their housing situation will be discussed with their personal officer. The Referral protocol gives some information for prisoners who are tenants and owners. Any offender who wishes to assign or give up their tenancy will be referred to Shelter who have a representative at the prison on a regular basis to get advice on their rights prior to going ahead with this.

If it is likely that the offender may become homeless on release the prison officer will complete a referral form and assist the offender to complete a waiting list application form. Both of the forms will be sent to the appropriate office.

The purpose of the referral form is to provide early warning of the offender being homeless on release and to allow Housing Services to make arrangements for the provision of appropriate accommodation (whether temporary or permanent) prior to release.

- a. On receipt of the Referral form the Accommodation Officer/Housing Management Officer should diary a date 2 months and 2 weeks prior to the release date on the referral form.
- b. At this time the Accommodation Officer/Housing Management Officer should contact the prison officer and check whether the offender's situation is still the same.
- c. If the offender is going to be homeless on release send a Homeless Assessment form to the Prison Officer who will complete up to and including page 11 of the form and will return it to the appropriate Housing Office.
- d. To allow you to process the assessment you may need further information in which case contact the Prison Officer and he/she will arrange a suitable time for you to speak to the offender on the phone.
- e. The homeless assessment form should be assessed and a decision letter processed and sent to the offender. If applicable, potentially homeless points should be awarded.
- f. Arrange to keep in touch with the offender to ensure you are aware of any changes in their circumstances.
- g. Arrange temporary accommodation prior to the release date, if it is required, and notify the prison of what accommodation has been booked.

- h. On the offender's release arrange an appointment to complete Housing Benefit forms.
- i. If the offender is in priority need, their application should be amended at this stage and appropriate points awarded.

If the prisoner is a sex offender the procedures in the Housing and Criminal Justice Social Work Services Protocol will apply.