

**CHANGING
LIVES**

Probation
Service



WOMEN'S CUSTODY SERVICES Cleveland and Northumbria Handbook for Participants

www.changing-lives.org.uk



Who we are/ What we do

Changing Lives provides support to women with experience of the criminal justice system across the North-East of England, both within custody and, following release, in easily accessible community venues at:

- Ashington
- North Shields
- Newcastle
- Gateshead
- South Shields
- Sunderland
- Hartlepool
- Stockton-on-Tees
- Middlesbrough
- Redcar

Our partner organisation A Way Out will provide community support to women being released to Middlesbrough and Redcar. We provide services in an inclusive female only environment which support women to raise their self-esteem and aspirations, by offering opportunities to make informed choices. We hope that you will find our services useful and inspiring in supporting you to achieve your potential.

What to Expect

- Your Probation Practitioners will make a referral to the Changing Lives Custody Accommodation Coaches, who will meet you within in two weeks. If you are being released within two weeks you will be classed as an Urgent Referral and prioritised to be seen.
- An initial assessment will take place and an action plan agreed with you regarding your accommodation needs, along with other referrals that can be made to support you on release. Your coach can assist you with tenancy applications and by advocating on your behalf with local authorities, housing associations and private landlords.
- Regular face to face appointments will be arranged to update you with progress. Probation Practitioners will be kept

informed at every stage of the process and will need to agree to where we are making referrals for you. If your Probation Practitioner has referred you for support after release, we will arrange for a Changing Lives or A Way Out Community Coach to have contact with you before you leave prison, this will be in person if possible, or by telephone. Your action plan and any work we have undertaken with or for you will be shared with your Community Coach. Please be assured that we aim to make this handover as smooth as possible and to reduce the distress of repeating personal information.

- On the day of release if needed we may be able to supply you with a hygiene pack and clothing donations. You will be given an information leaflet similar to this one, but letting you know what to expect while working with us in the community.

Next Steps

Following release, there is a range of workshops, training and advice available in our Women's Hubs to continue to support you.

Your Probation Practitioner and Community Coach will continue to review your progress in the community and your worker can talk to you about what other services are available in your local area. She will also be able to refer you to any other agencies to support and help you with your next steps.

The main aim is to assist women to establish a healthy, positive lifestyle by building on their strengths to achieve their goals.

Comments and Complaints

We welcome and value any comments or complaints that you may have, which will help us to improve our service, or simply let us know when we are getting it right or wrong. As with any service in the prison, these comments can be made on form COMP1 via staff on your wing.

Contact Details

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