

## **‘Not in My Back Yard’: The Challenge of Meeting the Housing Needs of Offenders**

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**Summary:** Evidence points to the fact that a lack of suitable housing and accommodation can increase the risk of offenders going on to commit further crimes. However, people continue to have concerns about known offenders, particularly sex offenders, living within communities. How do we attempt to meet the housing needs of offenders while at the same time providing reassurance and protection to local communities?

**Keywords:** Approved accommodation, probation, resettlement, community involvement, housing, homelessness, reoffending, high risk, sex offenders, Northern Ireland.

### **Introduction**

PBNI supervises around 3,600 offenders in the community subject to a range of court orders and licences (PBNI, 2014). The majority of these offenders will be accommodated within the community, usually with their own families and in their town of origin. However, for some offenders returning to their families and previous homes is simply not possible. This may be because of family and relationship breakdown during a period in custody or because of restrictions in relation to accommodation being imposed on an individual. For example, civil court orders such as Sexual Offence Prevention Orders can be used to place all kinds of restrictions on the behaviour of the offender. These might include, for example, restrictions on where an offender can reside and who they can associate with.

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