WRITE YOUR OWN STORY

YOUR NEXT CHAPTER. START HERE.

Practical. Not perfect.

A first-steps checklist for life after prison in England and Wales. One call. One appointment. One safer night. You do not have to sort everything at once.

> **Use the right support.** Circumstances differ. This is general information, not legal, benefits or medical advice. Work with your resettlement worker, probation practitioner, adviser or clinician. Follow the conditions that apply to you.

01 / YOUR NEXT SMALL STEP

Before release. Or today.

If you can, ask the prison resettlement team or support worker:

- Where will I sleep tonight, and who is my housing contact?
- Do I have a release address and a plan if it falls through?
- What ID do I have? If missing, who will help me replace it?
- What appointments, prescriptions, treatment or health records need continuity?
- What are my licence or probation conditions, reporting dates and contact details?
- Who can help me make a benefits claim and set up a bank account or phone access?

Write names, dates and reference numbers here:

The first thing I need help with:

02 / YOUR NEXT SMALL STEP

A safe place. A practical plan.

Contact the council's housing or homelessness team if you may have nowhere safe to stay. Ask what information they need and write down the person, date and reference number. If you are in immediate danger, call **999**.

My council/team: _____ Phone: _____

What I will ask: "I am leaving prison and may be homeless. What assessment and help can I get?"

A backup place or contact: _____

GOV.UK lists local council help and organisations including Shelter and Nacro. Eligibility and duties depend on your circumstances—ask the council or an adviser.

2 · ID, money and benefits

Ask your resettlement worker what identification you already have and what replacement route applies. Keep letters and take photos of important documents if safe.

Possible questions:

- Which benefit can I apply for, and when should I start?
- Can I get help from a work coach or local council?
- What evidence or account details will I need?
- Is there emergency help while a claim is being considered?

GOV.UK says people leaving prison may get support including Universal Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance and local council help; Wales has a Discretionary Assistance Fund. This is not a guarantee of eligibility. See GOV.UK: support when someone leaves prison and Universal Credit for prison leavers.

My claim/help action and date: _____

03 / YOUR NEXT SMALL STEP

Keep care and conditions connected.

Ask the prison healthcare team or clinician how prescriptions, records and appointments will continue. Contact a GP or pharmacist promptly if you are unsure what to take, have run out, or feel unwell. **Do not stop or change prescribed medication without clinical advice.**

GP/practice: _____ Phone: _____

Medication or appointment question to ask: _____

Unlock's leaving prison guide includes information about ongoing healthcare and GP registration. It is information, not a clinical decision for you.

Your conditions, work and support

4 · Licence and probation

Read your licence or written instructions. Keep every appointment and follow the conditions that apply to you. If something is unclear, ask your probation practitioner or legal adviser **before** acting. Do not rely on a friend's interpretation or a general online post.

Probation contact: _____ Next appointment: _____

Three questions I need answered:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Official starting point: GOV.UK probation. Unlock also links to information about licence conditions.

04 / YOUR NEXT SMALL STEP

Your first week. Your next step.

You do not need to guess what to disclose. The answer can depend on the role, the offence, the sentence and whether a conviction is spent or filtered. Ask a specialist adviser for the facts that fit your situation. Unlock's disclosure guide and helpline can help; there is no blanket answer for every job.

Role or training I am considering: _____

What I will ask Unlock or an adviser: _____

A strength, skill or reference I can bring: _____

My first-week list

- ☐ Confirm tonight's accommodation and backup.
- ☐ Put ID, phone, charger, travel details and key numbers together.
- ☐ Ask about benefits and food or emergency support.
- ☐ Confirm GP, medication and appointments with a clinician.
- ☐ Put probation/licence dates in a calendar.
- ☐ Make one supportive contact.
- ☐ Choose one small task for tomorrow.

My next small step: _____

Who can help me do it: _____

Progress can be practical and unglamorous: one call, one appointment, one safe night. This is a starter checklist, not a complete journal or a promise of an outcome.

Sources: Unlock: Leaving prison · GOV.UK: support when someone leaves prison · GOV.UK: probation · Shelter · Nacro