

# London Probation Approved Premises



## *From Possibility...*

Section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 2000, defines the population of Approved Premises as bailees, offenders serving community sentences and those on post-custodial licenses. However, with the release of PC37 circular of May 2005, the admission criteria were heavily revised to being reserved to *“those offenders or bailees posing a high or very high risk of harm”*. This led to a radical change in the profile of residents staying in the Approved Premises estate without processes necessarily changing to reflect increased risk.

The change in resident profile also led to a media focus on incidents such as the Hanson and White case, the outing of hostel locations in the News of the World and the Panorama documentary on the comings and goings of the residents of Bristol’s hostels. All these incidents have led to an increase in pressure on Approved Premises managers to ensure that they can deal with these high-risk cases more effectively and more consistently in the future.

*“While it is not possible to eliminate risk altogether when managing an offender in the community, the public is entitled to expect the authorities to do their job properly in managing serious and dangerous offenders - which simply did not happen in the cases of Hanson and White”*

Andrew Bridges, Chief Inspector of Probation.

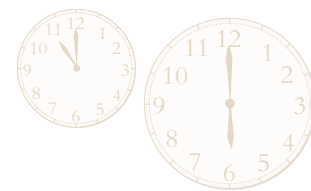
London Probation Area is unique, not only in its size, accounting for approximately one quarter of the Probation Service for England & Wales, but in its complexity and diversity. There are 13 Approved Premises covering London which comprise 1 female only hostel, 4 hostels managed for London Probation by a variety of voluntary organisations and a range of size of hostel, housing between 20 to 40 offenders at one time. With this complexity also came inconsistencies; with significant differences in the ways in which different hostels applied policy and managed offenders.

The Approved Premises Audit Recommendations Action Plan in January 2006 stated:

*“The redefining of the use of approved premises and the roll out of the new case management system, Delius, provides an opportunity for London to review existing policies and procedures for the operation of the hostel, resulting in a comprehensive document providing direction to staff.”*

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Ad Esse were invited to assist with the delivery of a risk-reduction project focused on the standardisation of processes and performance across the 13 approved premises. The aim was to develop one set of process maps and documents to be used across the whole of the Approved Premises organisation. This would allow for the simplification of management across the different hostels, the standardisation of procedures across the London Probation-run and voluntary-run premises and the easier of exchange of staff from one hostel to another.



## OUR APPROACH

In any process improvement project, it is essential to understand what 'better' looks like and to introduce effective measures to quantify success. Our initial diagnostic research work found out what processes existed and the potential impact of any improvements. Working with a selection of managers and their key team members, it became evident that there were huge inconsistencies in the running approved premises. In terms of performance, the main measure of a hostel hinged on the level of occupation of rooms in the hostel rather than other metrics that would have tracked risk reduction.

The running of a hostel is complex due to the very nature of housing, managing and developing its residents in preparation for reintegration into society along with managing the premises and the interface with the community and press. Changes to the initial admission process in London had meant further complexity for managers and staff. We quickly identified that the current processes and procedures were insufficient to handle the shift to high-risk residents.

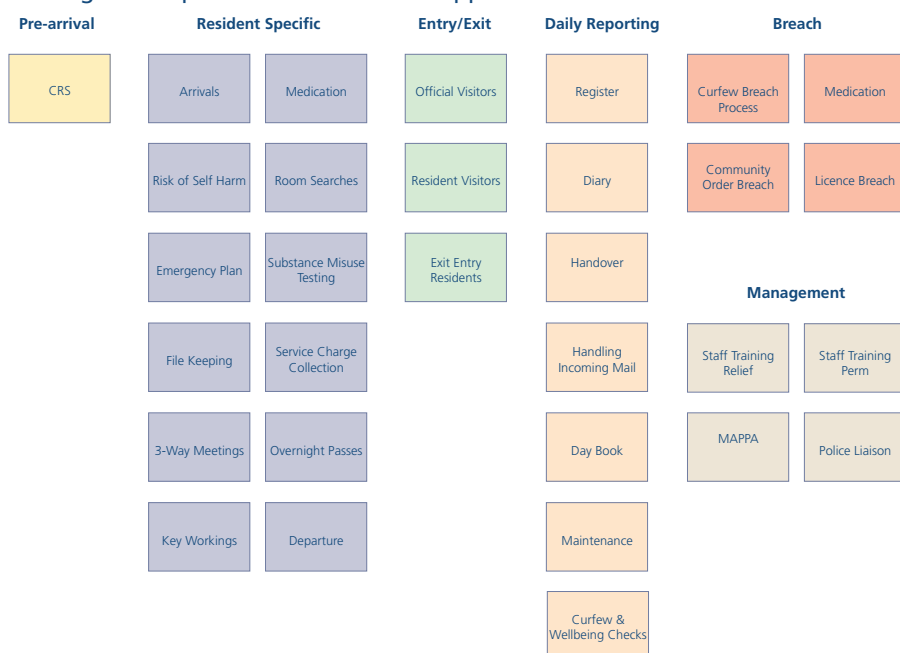
By sitting down with the hostel managers and their teams, we developed a list of over 30 high-level processes currently operated in the hostels. These covered the management of offenders from pre-arrival referrals right through to exit, as well as the processes required to manage staff and relationships with key stakeholders - MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements), the police, etc. Our team looked at all 13 hostels and documented the "as is" processes for each hostel and for each of the top level processes. Our aim was to crystallise the differences in process across the different hostels and look at what best practices existed for each process. We also attempted to assess risk level for each process.

### Risk was quantified in four ways:

- Risk of re-offending
- Risk to the general public
- Risk to Approved Premise staff and other residents
- Risk of self harming

The process mapping exercise also allowed us to identify levels of duplication, rework, problems, waste, etc. to give us an idea of what improvements needed to be made.

### The High-Level processes identified in Approved Premises:

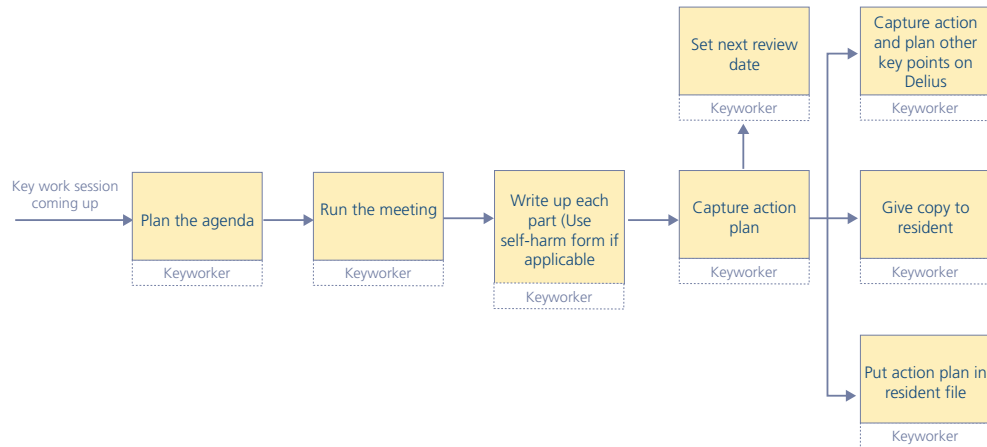


Working hand-in-hand with staff and managers, we could then begin to identify what an “**excellent**” set of processes would look like and design the end-to-end processes for enhanced supervision within Approved Premises. This involved creative thinking, stretching staff and managers’ current comfort zones and challenging existing work practices in order to address the risks that implementing PC37 introduced. At the same time, we reviewed all the documents used across the different premises and produced one standard list of the documentation and record-keeping required to operate each process.

Several key changes and enhancements focused around essential definitions of good process management, namely accountability (who owned the process), removing non value-adding steps and the introduction of simpler visual management tools. Using ControlES (a dedicated process management tool) we could clearly display the workings of a hostel with defined responsibilities and easy access to relevant documentation.

The following diagram shows a map of one process. This process, like all the others, is available to all staff in hostels and highlights who does what at each stage of the process as well as which steps have documents attached. Documents can be opened directly from the process map.

### Process Map for Key Working Process



#### Rules for Keyworking:

- Key worker must see the resident within 5 days

#### Guideline for frequency (manager to authorise change in frequency at each level):

- Meet weekly for first 4 weeks
- Fortnightly for next 2 months
- Monthly after that
- Continue weekly if very high risk resident
- Key work appointments must be set and issued on appointments card

## To Actuality...

Once the redesigned processes were mapped, 5 hostels were chosen to pilot them and feed back their learning before a complete rollout to all the hostels.

The maps were loaded onto their internal computer systems which meant that easy access was available to all staff members in real-time. Any changes made were reflected on all computers. All documentation was standardised where possible across the pilot hostels and documents were opened directly from the process map.

After further tweaks to the process maps and documents, they were ready to be rolled out to all the Approved Premises estate. One final workshop was held to give the remaining managers an action plan for rollout, coupled with some training on change management techniques to aid a smooth introduction of the new processes.

Staff are now working to the new systems with, for the first time, a standard set of instructions and documents in all the hostels. As changes and improvements are made to the new processes these are captured centrally and distributed to all staff on new electronic process maps. This means that the next time staff log on, the new process or document appears in front of them.



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## THE BENEFITS

Because Approved Premises staff are dealing with the offenders in the community with the highest risk profiles, there is always a risk that an offender will commit a serious crime whilst staying in a hostel. However, having formal, documented, up to date, processes which are clear to all, including offenders, means that the early warning signs and high-risk behaviours are more likely to be identified and acted upon at the earliest possible stage.

The new processes, documents and use of ControlES to link the two together also gives the following benefits:

- Real focus on risk management in all processes that an approved premise will use.
- Through the journey an offender will take from arrival and their life at the hostel including focused key work sessions, offender management intervention and programme allocation such as skills development
- Through daily activities such as curfews, visiting, daily recording and handover from shift to shift.
- Through contingency planning to encompass unplanned risk issues such as media intervention, resident to resident issues and hostel building disasters e.g. fire, floods etc.
- Through proactive measures against substance misuse and activities considered to be triggers of re-offending.
- Increased visual management techniques have resulted in a clearer picture of activities, roles and responsibilities and of resident behaviours.
- Consistency throughout the 13 Approved Premises allowing stability and more efficient relief work together with consistent vision and operational excellence.
- A standard set of processes that facilitate auditing by Approved Premises senior management and other external agencies.
- Dedicated planning measures of day to day activities have meant that unscheduled staff can pick up the day's events and plans at a glance thus enhancing work flow and risk management
- Clearer guidelines and expectations set for residents thus allowing greater stability and reducing likelihood of re-offending.
- The ability to more easily move permanent and relief staff from one hostel to another.

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