

PBNI Disclosure Log – Response to Request

Request Reference: 023.40.15

Date of Request: 1 September 2015

Date of Response: 1 October 2015

Request and Response

- Q1. How many offenders have been housed in the Approved Premises (AP) at 21 Edward Street, Portadown, in each year (Minimum and Maximum number) in each calendar year from 2011?

Calendar Year	No of Offenders housed	Minimum in any month	Maximum In any month
2011	17	3	9
2012	18	3	10
2013	23	7	12
2014	23	6	12
Notes			
	An individual may occupy a bed for a very short period of time such as 1 month or a longer period of time such as 12 months in a one year period.		

- Q2. What is the range of offences committed by the individuals housed in this AP

Any offender who is subject to a probation order, has been released from custody (on licence) and considered a) homeless and/or b) requires further support and supervision is eligible to be considered for a place in Edward Street.

- Q3. How much does PBNI pay for accommodation at 21 Edward Street per offender?

PBNI does not pay for accommodation at 21 Edward Street. Funding is provided by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive under the Department of Social Development's [Supporting People Programme](#), direct to the Simon Community NI, who is the service provider for the Edward Street Hostel

- Q4. What programme of support or counselling or both is expected to be provided to offenders housed in Approved Premises, either by the contracted third party or by social services?

All residents are assigned a keyworker from within the hostel who will meet with the resident and their probation officer on the day of arrival for an induction meeting. A case plan is devised for each person dependent upon their individual needs. Any offence focused work will be undertaken by the Probation Officer. Other work, for example addressing addictions and preparation for independent living, can be provided by other community and voluntary groups, health trusts or sector providers. Social Services are involved when and if required

- Q5. Does counselling of the offenders take place in this AP or at another venue?

This will depend on the nature of the counselling and the service provider and whether it can be delivered within the premises, or at a location designated by the service provider. As outlined above some work is undertaken by hostel staff. Specialist counselling where this is assessed as necessary would normally take place in the service providers own offices.

Q6. **Would the PBNI expect to increase the numbers of offenders, housed at 21 Edward Street, should the property be expanded to 15 single bedrooms?**

The Edward Street premises always had provision for 15 beds. The number of offenders housed at any given time, will be dictated by need, availability and suitability. It will not exceed 15.

Q7. **What is the reason that the PBNI use a charitable organisation such as the Simon Community to house offenders and why does the PBNI not provide secure accommodation for these offenders?**

PBNI does not own or manage accommodation provision for offenders. It uses a number of approved accommodation providers throughout Northern Ireland which are run by the voluntary and faith based sector including the Simon Community NI.

Q8. **What requirement is there (if any) to ensure that local inhabitants of premises in the vicinity of Approved Premises are aware that offenders are housed in these premises?**

PBNI is legally obliged to maintain confidentiality in respect of offenders under supervision and comply with the law about what information is released to the public about offenders in the community.

PBNI and partner agencies are always willing to engage with communities about any concerns they have about offenders living in the community. In relation to Edward Street ongoing meetings have taken place with elected representatives, residents and others as requested.

When considering accommodation for offenders consideration is always given to victim impact and community safety. The priority in all the work we do is public protection

Q9. **Can you provide evidence of how the premises at 21 Edward Street Portadown became approved to house offenders, together with providing the specific risk assessments for each type of offender housed there? I expect this would demonstrate what controls are in place to minimise the risk to locals in the vicinity of the Approved Premises?**

The Probation Board (NI) Order 1982 sets out the functions of the Board which include making arrangements with voluntary organisations and others to provide and maintain hostels with the agreement of the Department of Justice. The decision to use any particular premises comes about through discussions with partner agencies and approval is made by the joint commissioning groups for Supporting People Programme. All Approved Premises are subject to regulation through the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Supporting People programme. All offenders living in approved accommodation are subject to a risk assessment and risk management plans. We cannot provide you with those individual risk assessments as it contains personal and sensitive information. Offenders may be subject to a range of restrictions in a risk management plan such as: curfews; identified areas where they are not allowed to go; and alcohol and drug testing

Q10. **Has the PBNI take into consideration, in carrying out the supervision of offenders in 21 Edward Street, the fact that the premises are in close proximity (less than 30 metres) to a kindergarten, a dance school for children and an after school club for teenagers?**

PBNI's role is to work with other agencies to keep communities safer and public protection is our priority. Consideration is given to a range of factors in supervising offenders including the location of their accommodation. Appropriate restrictions are considered and may be put in place through an individual's risk management plan. Curfews and other restrictions are in place to address such concerns

If you have any queries about this letter, or if you feel I have misinterpreted your request please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the way PBNI has handled your request, you may ask for an internal review using our complaints procedure. A copy of our [complaints procedure](#) is available on our website www.pbni.org.uk.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

Please note that PBNi publishes responses to requests for information on its website where we believe there may be a wider public interest. If requests are published they are anonymised i.e. details of the requester are not published.

