



Please ensure that this bulletin is circulated to ALL STAFF.

**Please print out copies of this bulletin for distribution around your establishment.
You may also wish to distribute it to Managers at your morning meeting.**

Quick-Time Learning Bulletin

Risks Associated with Offence & Status

For further information on risks, triggers and complex behaviours please refer to Chapters 3 and 9 of PSI 64/2011 and QTLB 10 (Increased Risks in Young Offenders and Young People) and annexes D and E of PSI 74/2011 (Early Days in Custody).

A prisoner's risk (or likelihood) of self-harm and/or suicide may increase in certain circumstances. Where these circumstances or triggers are identified, appropriate action must be taken. For example, open an Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) plan, generate a referral to the mental health team or initiate a case review.

A number of recent, apparently self-inflicted deaths, have highlighted the risk of self-harm and/or suicide associated with remand prisoners and the need for extra vigilance where prisoners have, or will be, exposed to particularly intense emotional pressure.

Research suggests that circumstances likely to increase risk include:

- A murder, serious violent or sexual offence where the victim is a family member (particularly the prisoner's child or partner).
- Prisoners being transferred from open to closed conditions.
- It is the prisoner's first time in custody.
- A trial that will attract a high level of public interest where there is likely to be public shame on the prisoner prior, during or immediately following the trial.
- A change in status e.g. from remand to trial or sentenced to immigration detention.
- Publicity about the offence such as local or national media attention.
- Abuse from other prisoners in relation to offences.
- The breakdown of family relationships.
- Further charges or being recalled on licence.
- Anniversaries and Key Dates.
- Bereavement of family or close friends, including exposure to suicide.
- Substance Misuse or Detoxification, including alcohol.
- Segregation.
- Transfers between prisons, even progressive moves may increase risk in the early days of a new prison.

Prompts for Action

- Do you have effective systems in place to accurately record and share information about prisoners who may be vulnerable to self-harm or suicide, particularly in relation to the nature of their offence and an upcoming trial?
- What processes do you have in place to ensure that staff are aware of the risks and triggers that may raise a prisoner's risk of suicide and/or self-harm?
- Are your reception and first night staff aware that prisoners charged with homicide are an identified vulnerable group and may be at a higher risk of suicide?
- Do prisoners remanded on charges of domestic murder receive an assessment by the mental health team as a matter of course?
- What processes do you have in place to identify and support prisoners who are on, or have previously been on, an ACCT and have a key event or anniversary approaching?
- Do you arrange case reviews or post-closure reviews when a trigger is approaching?
- What arrangements do you have in place to protect those prisoners who have undergone a change of status, have been returned to closed conditions from an open estate, been recalled on licence or had an appeal rejected?
- What signposting processes have you in place for those prisoners that may need to speak to the Samaritans and/or Listeners.

Contacts

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