



Who Needs To See This Bulletin?

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 Managing Violent Behaviours

NOMS is committed to a zero tolerance approach to violence. Violence is not acceptable in any form. Every verbal or physical act of violence must be challenged. Appropriate sanctions for perpetrators must be applied robustly, in a fair and consistent manner and victims must be supported and protected.

Any sanctions applied must have authority under the Prison or YOI Rules. PSIs on IEP reviews, adjudications and segregation are the appropriate authorities. If sanctions are applied as part of local policies without the authority of an IEP review or an adjudication hearing, they are likely to be unlawful.

It is important to collect, analyse and act upon comprehensive management information such as SIRs and the Violence Management Report on the Hub. The VMR provides detailed data on violent incidents and the management response to them. Analysis of this data will provide an overview of violence management from which trends can be identified and action plans developed.

KEY LEARNING POINTS:

- Violence takes many forms, has many labels and is unevenly distributed around the prison estate.
- In order to reduce violence, it is essential that there is a detailed understanding of violence in individual prisons.
- Using the term “bullying” as a catch all term to describe a range of behaviours can lead to a reduction in the perceived impact of violent acts.
- The name used to describe violence can influence how the act is perceived. By using accurate descriptions of the behaviour exhibited, the most appropriate action can be identified.

Example 1 - A prisoner who has taken another prisoner's tobacco or other property has, in fact, committed an act of theft and is not "bullying".

Example 2 - A prisoner who pushes another out of the way in a queue or en-route to another part of the prison has committed an assault and is not "bullying".

Example 3 - A prisoner who becomes angry, verbally abusive and threatening to another prisoner over a game of pool has, in fact, verbally assaulted and threatened as opposed to "bullied".

- By addressing individual behaviours, managers are able to review adjudication tariffs and the IEP schemes in order to tackle the most prominent breaches of prison rules.
- Interventions used locally must be implemented under appropriate authority, such as the IEP or adjudication policies.

IT IS VITAL THAT BEHAVIOUR IS PROPERLY IDENTIFIED, AND APPROPRIATE SANCTIONS ARE LAWFULLY AND PROMPTLY IMPOSED.

PROMPTS FOR ACTIONS

- Challenging a prisoner's behaviour in the early stages will reduce the likelihood of escalation.
- Remind prisoners of the consequences of their own actions ideally through face to face contact.
- Do you routinely challenge prisoners who are verbally abusive to each other?
- Do you challenge prisoners on the behaviours exhibited or do you use umbrella terms such as "bullying" or "anti-social behaviour"?
- Does your prison routinely collect data on the types of behaviour exhibited and reflect these within adjudication and IEP policies?
- Analyse the Violence Management Report (VMR) from The Performance Hub and also SIRs to ascertain what is happening and where. This should contribute to the development of your violence management action plans.
- Make prisoners aware that information relating to their involvement in violent acts will be recorded in NOMIS and will be available for staff undertaking assessments. This could jeopardise sentence progression i.e. future parole decisions, re-categorisation, ROTL, restoration of remission, HDC etc.
- How does the atmosphere in your work area feel? If you have the feeling that the area you are working in is relaxed and calm, prisoners will feel the same and this may help to reduce spontaneous outbursts of violence.

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