**Progressive Recategorisation**

Covid restrictions have meant that many prisoners have been unable to complete offending behaviour programmes and other activities aimed at reducing reoffending. This may have resulted, among other things, some prisoners being rejected for a progressive move to a lower security category.

The security categorisation policy framework, which has now been implemented throughout the male estate, makes it clear that all available information and positive aspects of behaviour must be considered as part of the risk assessment for a lower security category. This includes the extent to which the individual engages successfully with the prison regime, and any work and training opportunities (bearing in mind current restrictions).

Knowledge of the individual, and their custodial history, will support a fuller risk assessment than might be possible at initial categorisation. Factors to be considered in assessing suitability for low security conditions will include the nature of the offence, any outstanding charges or proceedings such as a Serious Crime Prevention Order or an ongoing Confiscation Order. It will also include custodial history, including previous breaches of trust, information about ongoing criminal activity in custody, and any risks highlighted by MAPPA.

Where regime restrictions have prevented participation in offending behaviour work, staff must look to other sources of information regarding suitability for the lower security category. Where sentence planning objectives cannot be achieved, staff may need to reflect upon the reasons for non-attainment, and how this might relate to active risk and harm. Staff may need to consider whether objectives set could reasonably be completed at a later stage either within the community on ROTL from the open estate or following release from prison. Focus should be on the current risk rather than highlighting any single reason to impede progression.

Additionally, any change to actuarial (static) risk scores should be considered in the wider context of that person’s progression through their sentence. This will be particularly important for adult males convicted of sexual offences where risk of sexual reoffending will soon be assessed using a new actuarial risk assessment tool - the OASys Sexual reoffending Predictor (OSP) (that will replace RM2000). It will be essential in these circumstances that any change of score alone does not automatically alter someone’s progression through their sentence.

When considering an individual for open conditions the individual must be assessed as:

* low risk of abscond,
* low risk of harm to the public or has a suitable plan in place to manage identified risk,
* unlikely to continue criminality while in custody, and
* unlikely to otherwise take advantage of the low security or disrupt the good order/regime of the open estate.

Further details are available in the Security Categorisation Policy Framework, which is available on the intranet (see below). Please also see the DCS OMU Guidance document, available from your Head of Offender Management.

<https://intranet.noms.gsi.gov.uk/policies-and-subjects/policy-frameworks/security-categorisation-policy-framework>

PSI 39/2011 remains the relevant instruction for the women’s estate.

Greg Riley-Smith