

Safety during Recovery

Our learning from the impact of the lockdown measures on staff and prisoner safety has highlighted much of what we already know about safety and decency. Ultimately, we know that getting the safety basics right in establishments continues to be the most effective way of keeping people safe.

Our safety focus during recovery is staff and prisoner wellbeing. A key part of this will be supporting positive relationships, as well as the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff and prisoners.

What works?

We have learnt the value of **regular communications** from Governors and Directors to staff, prisoners and their families, and the importance of **consulting with prisoners and staff**, particularly as we move through the regime stages. We also know the significance of **encouraging prisoners to feel hopeful and positive** about their plans for the future.

Prisons are encouraged to use the [safety self-assessment tool](#) to inform their overall safety strategies. Further guidance can be found on the [safety support pages of the intranet](#), where you will also find our safety [intranet directory](#), to help staff to navigate their way around the safety support pages.

Peer Support, including Listener schemes and Samaritans

Peer Support is a valuable resource. We know that many schemes, including the Listener scheme have been suspended or are operating with reduced capacity and support at present. Wherever possible, prisons should aim to maintain and promote these schemes to prisoners, and encourage them to volunteer, as they can provide a vital lifeline for those in need. [Peer support schemes guidance](#) is available to help you set up and make the most of peer support opportunities.

Training and support visits for Listeners by Samaritans volunteers are permitted where local circumstances allow, and the local branch is able to maintain them. Where this is not possible, prisons should continue to work closely with their local Samaritans branch to facilitate remote support and to resume visits as soon as possible. Any problems should be escalated to the group safety lead who can liaise with the Samaritans regional prison support officer to resolve them.

Where Listener numbers have dwindled, prisons should work with Samaritans on recruitment, encouraging prisoners to apply, using the standard application form and being as flexible as possible about scheduling training sessions. Prisons should promote the Listener scheme: with prisoners by distributing Samaritans materials and ensuring the Listener DVD is used in induction; and with staff by inviting local volunteers to provide awareness sessions at staff meetings and briefings.

It may be helpful to hold a meeting between the Governor and safety team and the local branch director and prison support officer to discuss how to manage the recovery period. Further guidance is available on operating the [Listener scheme during Covid-19](#) and [working with Samaritans](#).

Staff wellbeing and support

This remains one of our top priorities as it is important that staff are looked after during this difficult time. [Information on support services](#) can be found here in the [staff support – a quick guide](#). Prisons should have an identified staff support lead, who is linked in to the prison group staff support co-ordinator, ensuring that staff support (including the care team, TRiM and mental health allies) is working well, enabling staff across the prison to access appropriate support at the right time.

Understanding risks of harm

Prisons must continue to identify the risks of violence, self-harm and suicide and looking at what is driving this behaviour at a local level:

- The [risk identification toolkit](#) provides detailed guidance on identifying risk of harm, both to self and others.
- Guidance on reviewing safety and risk assessment processes following video appearances can be found here - [assessing risk of harm in prisoners attending court and other appointments](#) and here [SAFE process following a video appearance](#)
- For more information about risk identification please visit the [risk identification page](#) of the Safety intranet.
- [The wellbeing plan](#) can help prisoners to make informed choices about their own safety and resilience.
- Information on [prisoner debt support](#), including [specific guidance on managing debt as restrictions lift](#) is also available.

Early days in custody

Throughout this period, newly-arrived prisoners on Reverse Cohorting Units must receive the same induction information as they would have done pre Covid-19. All new arrivals must be treated with decency, with their immediate needs met. This includes access to telephones and activation of numbers on their PIN accounts in line with public protection requirements, also, information about how to access the support and facilities available to them. More information, including the [early days toolkit](#), is available on the [early days and transitions](#) pages of the intranet.

Managing risk of self-harm

Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) must be used effectively to provide good quality support to every person at risk. Information on ACCT v6 is available [here](#). The [self-harm guide for staff](#) contains useful information for understanding self-harm and different avenues of support available.

Managing risk of violence

[Challenge, support and intervention plans \(CSIPs\)](#) should continue or restart effectively to manage and support people.

Isolated individuals/use of segregation

[Isolating individuals guidance](#) is available to help raise local awareness of those that may be isolating. It may be helpful for prison safety teams to work through the isolated individuals section of the [safety self-assessment tool](#) as part of their safety reviews.

Supporting and talking to prisoners

We should not underestimate the power of everyday conversations with prisoners, and the positive impact meaningful conversations can have. Staff should aim to make every conversation or interaction with a prisoner matter, using the principles of [FMI \(five minute intervention\)](#).

Other useful resources to help with this include:

- [The key work toolkit](#)
- [Conversational playing cards](#)
- [Wellbeing materials and in-cell activities](#)

The 5Ps Safety Recovery Guide

The attached document provides prisons with some safety reminders for consideration during their recovery planning. It is by no means an exhaustive list or a 'To Do' list, but simply some pointers and key prompts to support prisons when reviewing their safety priorities for recovery. The safety reminders have been linked to the 5Ps to help prisons identify their safety priorities in the short/medium term and assist with planning sessions.

5 Minute Safety Briefings

We have previously circulated short briefing documents covering a range of topics as part of Safety Week which can be used in staff briefings in recovery:

[Staff Briefings: Supporting those at risk of suicide and self-harm](#)

[Staff Briefing: Debt](#)

[Staff Briefing: Rehabilitative Culture](#)

[Staff Briefing: Isolated individuals](#)

[Staff Briefing: BWVC](#)

[Staff Briefing: FMI](#)

[Staff Briefing: PAVA and SPEAR](#)

Contact us:

If you have any difficulties accessing any of the safety guidance or information on the intranet, or if you have any questions about Safety and Recovery please contact safercustodypolicyandlearning@justice.gov.uk or visit the [safety pages of the intranet](#).