



**The Professional Trades Union for Prison,
Correctional & Secure Psychiatric Workers**

National Chair: Mark Fairhurst
General Secretary: Steve Gillan

Headquarters:
Cronin House
245 Church St.
Edmonton
London N9 9HW
t. 020 8803 0255
f. 020 8803 1761
e. general@poauk.org.uk
w. www.poauk.org.uk

North Regional Office
1 Linden House
Sardinia St.
Leeds
LS10 1BH

t. 01132 428833
f. 01132 429075
e. adminnro@poauk.org.uk

Northern Ireland
Castell House
116 Ballywalter Rd.
Millisle Co Down
BT22 2HS

t. 02891 861928
f. 02891 861839
e. adminni@poauk.org.uk

Scotland
21 Calder Rd.
Edinburgh
Scotland
EH11 3 PF

t. 0131 443 8105
f. 0131 444 0657
e. adminscot@poauk.org.uk

POA Circular 003/2020

Action		Information	
England/Wales	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	England/Wales	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scotland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scotland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Northern Ireland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Northern Ireland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Special Hospitals	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Hospitals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Private Sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Private Sector	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
IRC	<input type="checkbox"/>	IRC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

16th January 2020

Dear Colleagues

HEALTH AND SAFETY NOTICE

Branches should be aware the Director General of Public Prisons Phil Cople has issued the attached safety instruction to all prison Governors.

In the instruction Governors of establishments must carry out a review of existing local risk assessments of the significant items which prisoners could fashion into weapons, and ensure that appropriate controls are in place to manage this risk, by the end of January 2020; in all cases, this must include razor blades and, where applicable, tins and tin lids, and ceramic items.

In addition, the instruction to Governors states the following PSI 09/2016 sets out their Accommodation Fabric Checks (AFCs) policy and has guidance for completion of this risk assessment. The guidance covers risk factors such as physical security breaches, fashioning escape aids or weapons, storing illicit items, and considerations relating to the level of staff contact with prisoners and to dynamic security.

The PSI itemises the mandatory elements of an AFC that must be covered. It also instructs staff conducting an AFC to take into account any decency issues and take appropriate action. Some establishments have augmented the mandatory security elements of an AFC with other checks (for example, checks on inundation points). All Governors must ensure staff carry out AFCs in accordance with local instructions, which must in all cases be compliant with PSI 09/2016. This again must be completed by the end of January 2020.

PSI 09/2016 states there is no central mandate for establishments outside of the High Security Estate to conduct Accommodation Fabric Checks (AFCs) on a daily basis. Establishments outside the High Security Estate are required, therefore, to carry out a risk assessment to determine the frequency of AFCs required.

Director General of Public Prisons Phil Cople reiterates it is important that Governors engage locally with Trade Union branches when they revisit your local risk assessments and Safe Systems of Work.

The National Executive at yesterday's NEC meeting decided to advise all local committees in England and Wales to request an extra-ordinary Health and Safety meeting to discuss the Phil Cople letter and any specific safety concerns they may have locally. Ideally, these meetings should take place within a week of 24th January 2020 and the minutes of these meetings should be shared with your NEC Representative.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joe Simpson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

JOE SIMPSON
Deputy General Secretary

ENCLOSURES

Improvised weapons - Items presenting a risk to personal safety

Governors of establishments must carry out a review of existing local risk assessments of the significant items which prisoners could fashion into weapons, and ensure that appropriate controls are in place to manage this risk, by the end of January 2020; in all cases, this must include razor blades and, where applicable, tins and tin lids, and ceramic items. Prison Group Directors need to ensure that these have been completed to the standard required and report to their respective Executive Director by Friday 7 February 2020.

I have detailed further guidance and assessment templates about razor blades in particular and these are attached at Annex A.

Accommodation Fabric Checks (AFCs)

PSI 09/2016 sets out our AFC policy, and has guidance for completion of this risk assessment. The guidance covers risk factors such as physical security breaches, fashioning escape aids or weapons, storing illicit items, and considerations relating to the level of staff contact with prisoners and to dynamic security.

The PSI itemises the mandatory elements of an AFC that must be covered. It also instructs that staff conducting an AFC must take into account any decency issues and take appropriate action. Some establishments have augmented the mandatory security elements of an AFC with other checks (for example, checks on inundation points). All Governors must ensure that staff carry out AFCs in accordance with local instructions, which must in all cases be compliant with PSI 09/2016. This again must be completed by the end of January 2020 with Prison Group Directors confirming with their respective Executive Director by Friday 7 February 2020.

I reiterate that it is important that you engage locally with Trade Union branches when you revisit your local risk assessments and Safe Systems of Work.