

Improvements to the Person Escort Record – update from NOMS

Background

1. Following discussions with the IAP in 2011 about the Person Escort Record (PER), HMIP agreed to undertake a thematic report on the use of the PER with detainees at risk of harm. This was published in October 2012. There were several recommendations aimed at improving the quality of information provided on PERs and for this to be supported by multi-agency forums where staff could develop their understanding of how the information would be used.

2. Follow this link to access the report:

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprison/inspections/the-use-of-the-person-escort-record-with-detainees-at-risk-of-self-harm/>

Update

3. The Secretariat commissioned an update from NOMS as to how they were progressing with implementing the recommendation from the HMIP thematic. They provided the following information and Panel members are invited to discuss the extent to which this activity improves the use of PER for sharing information about detainees at risk of self-harm/suicide.

Update from NOMS November 2014

- *NOMS' South Central area is co-ordinating the pilot PER Regional Forum, with the work continuing under the management of the Governor of Winchester (Dave Rogers), and the forum has a reporting line to a Steering Group;*
- *The Forum's focus is on the core objectives that the Inspectorate recommendations had set out for a local regional forum made up of representatives of the three bodies primarily involved – prisons, police and escort contractors, with additional relevant stakeholders;*
- *The pilot regional forum has a quality control brief primarily around the PER but with a wider brief to look at safer custody issues prior, during and post movements. The main functions of the regional forum include:*
 - *Ensure that there are opportunities for different agencies to understand each others work and why the PER is important.*
 - *Raise local issues and problems in this area.*
 - *Make suggestions for changes in policy or practice at a national level such as changes in the PER form or safer custody policy.*
 - *Make suggestions to local management for changes in the way local prisons, police or contractors operate.*
 - *Set up local procedures for audit and quality control.*
 - *Set up local procedures for training and briefing.*
 - *Qualitative checks of PER*
 - *Ensure that regional management (and HQ where relevant) have reports on quality of PER and recommendations locally as to what can be done to improve the situation.*
- *The Forum has now met twice at Winchester – 30 September and 31 October, and its main focus to date has been on how we can improve PER to address the HMIP Recommendations, and the related ones from the IPCC and from Coroners in response to deaths in custody.*

- *The Forum's role in addressing potential improvements to PER has been invaluable. Thus far we have developed a proposal with:*
 - *Two draft PERs:*
 - *A PER for national or permanent moves, (all courts and Inter Prison Transfers (IPT);*
 - *the Suicide and Self Harm Warning Form now forms an integral part of this PER to prevent the loss of vital information - a recommendation made by the Inspectorate and by others;*
 - *The opportunity has also been taken to bring together in one section all the relevant medical information and to add a "Red Flag Warning" page which means staff can record any information on heightened risks and bring these to the attention of escorting and receiving staff.*
 - *A PER for local moves (scheduled daily hospital visits, local court, weddings and funeral escorts, visiting dying relatives and police productions);*
 - *This also has a section which brings together all the relevant medical information and*
 - *A "Red Flag Warning" page to record any information on heightened risks and bring these to the attention of escorting and receiving staff.*
 - *Both PER documents have an improved level of accountability and enable risks to be handed over and signed for.*
- *These draft PERs will be discussed by a Steering Group, managed by NOMS HQ, which is scheduled to meet on 20 November, and will give an opportunity for a wider group of stakeholders to contribute their views, and to decide whether we can pilot those new forms in a discrete area. The pilot would determine whether the changes were effective, and also to identify any subsequent training and briefing needs.*
- *Both these PERs could be considered as an interim solution, which would address the key issues identified.*
- *The South Central regional practitioners' forum will run until at least the end of this year as a pilot. NOMS will be evaluating it; and prepare a proposal template for other regions to use, for the rolling out of the forum principle nationwide. Other primary stakeholders such as the police and escort contractors may consider a similar process.*
- *That evaluation work is dependent on the progress made in South Central.*
- *The national roll out of the forum will occur during 2015. Timescales to be agreed.*
- *Consideration is also being given as to the practicalities of an electronic PER, including an interim solution.*