



Policy name: Prevention of Abscond Policy Framework (Open Estate Only)

Reference: N/A

Issue Date: January 2023 for NSF pilot sites ONLY as listed below. **Implementation Date:** TBA

HMP Ford

No PSI's or service specifications will be cancelled with the introduction of this policy framework.

Introduces amendments to the following documents: N/A

Action required by:

x	HMPPS HQ	x	Governors
x	Public Sector Prisons		Heads of Group
x	Contracted Prisons		The Probation Service
x	Under 18 Young Offender Institutions		Other providers of Probation and Community Services
	HMPPS Rehabilitation Contract Services Team		

Mandatory Actions: All groups referenced above must adhere to the Requirements section of this Policy Framework, which contains all mandatory actions.

Governors must ensure that any new local policies that they develop because of this Policy Framework are compliant with relevant legislation, including the Public-Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act, 2010).

Section 6 of the Policy Framework contains guidance to implement the mandatory requirements set out in section 4 of this Policy Framework. Whilst it will not be mandatory to follow what is set out in this guidance, clear reasons to depart from the guidance should be documented locally. Any questions concerning departure from the guidance can be sent to the contact details below.

In this document the term Governor also applies to Directors of Contracted Prisons

How this policy framework will be audited / monitored: In public sector prisons, Prison Group Directors (PGDs) will monitor compliance with requirements set out within the policy framework in their prisons using the auditing and monitoring tools described in this framework. In contracted prisons monitoring of compliance will be through the standard contract management processes.

Health and Safety (H&S) assurance and monitoring for public sector prisons is undertaken through H&S monitoring and assurance within the H&S function, using the H&S audit and reporting tool compliance checklist. The H&S processes may be different for contracted prisons and therefore, contracted prisons must have their own H&S arrangements which ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees.

Quality assurance for public sector prisons and contracted prisons is provided by HMPPS Operational and Systems Assurance Group (OSAG) through the security audit.

Mandatory elements of instructions should be subject to management checks (and may be subject to self or peer audit by operational line management), as judged to be appropriate by the managers with responsibility for delivery.

Resource Impact: The identified resource impact for this policy framework document is staffing within the security department. The initial creation, pilot and roll out will impact in terms of the time taken to create the NSF and associated LSS' within establishments.

At this time, it is expected that the new NSF will be placed on the HMPPS intranet so there will be no financial cost associated with a digital platform.

Once the initial phase has been completed, resource implication is not expected to be any different to current requirements around the management of the NSF and establishment LSS.

It is expected that this new framework will assist establishments in reducing the risk of abscond. This in turn will be expected to reduce the HMPPS and other agencies financial cost and reputational damage that results from any abscond.

Contact: NationalSecurityFrameworkHQ@justice.gov.uk / security.procedures@justice.gov.uk

Deputy/Group Director sign-off: Richard Vince, Deputy Director Security

Approved by OPS for publication: Sarah Coccia, Executive Director Prisons

HMPPS Operational and Systems Assurance Group (OSAG) through the Security Audit.

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is committed to preventing victims by changing lives, working together to protect the public and help people lead law abiding lives.
- 1.2 Public protection is core to the successful and effective delivery of offender management. In managing prisoners in custody and upon release in the community, HMPPS has the protection of the public, including victims, children and vulnerable adults, as an overriding aim in all its activity.
- 1.3 This Policy Framework provides necessary information in a clearer more concise manner improving the way in which we manage security, specifically around escape and abscond from establishments. The document provides establishments, with the information and guidance needed to maintain high levels of security, prevent escape, or abscond and maintain a secure and stable environment for all. It applies to all public and contracted establishments.

2. Evidence

- 2.1 HMPPS Annual Digest available via www.gov.uk on the internet provides year on year stats regarding absconds.
- 2.2 Consistent and confident application of policies and procedures is fundamental to mitigating these risks and vulnerabilities

3. Outcomes

- 3.1 The successful use of this Policy Framework and supporting documents will ensure:

Successful maintenance of security and order during all aspects of prison life, preventing prisoners from absconding. Whilst ensuring protection of the public and implementation of the sentences and orders imposed by the courts.

- 3.2 All procedures are conducted in a manner which ensures:

- Public Protection
- Maintenance of security
- Health and Safety
- Equality for all - decisions in relation to prevention of abscond must not be influenced by any matters irrelevant to the process. Processes must not discriminate against people with the personal protected characteristics protected under the 2010 Equality Act: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- 3.3 Process and procedures are in place to ensure that staff are fully aware that assessed risks may change and are able to respond accordingly.
- 3.4 The Policy Framework, guidance and supporting tools sets lawful and professional expectations for the prevention of abscond from prison custody. This will be measured against the following standards.

- Incidents which challenge the security, safety, order and control of a prison are resolved through approved practice.
- Security decision making is defensible and takes account of the risk assessment process to identify and manage local risks.
- Security management systems and practice are characterised by strong leadership, robust governance (reporting and scrutiny), and a learning culture.
- Security management systems, practice and governance meets equalities responsibilities, duty of care and human rights obligations and priorities.

3.5 All within HMPPS to understand and report correctly as per the following definition.

Abscond

3.6 A prisoner absconds if they are unlawfully at large due to leaving open prison conditions without permission. It is only possible to abscond from open prison conditions.

3.7 An incident is deemed to be an abscond and included in the reported annual total if the prisoner is at liberty for at least 15 minutes before recapture or an offence is committed during an abscond lasting less than 15 minutes.

4. Requirements (see guidance for further information)

NSF Risk Assessments

4.1 To inform the Local Security Strategy (LSS), establishments will need to include an evidence-based assessment process which identifies and highlights the risks to their establishment. The assessment must be a whole prison approach which includes input from a variety of stakeholders of varying grades of all staff.

4.2 Risks must be assessed annually as a minimum and in addition, whenever risks are perceived to have changed significantly.

4.3 Governors must ensure they have prepared their LSS for each of the five key threat areas outlined in the National Prison Control Strategy. These must adhere to all the required actions and utilise a methodology that identifies further actions to manage the risk. Governors and Directors may choose to develop additional risk assessments to guide a local response to a potential risk that is unique to their establishment, for example, internal movement.

4.4 Governors must take into consideration emerging risks influenced by changes in population, new build work, changes to regime and any other identified risk factors.

Throughout this document reference is made to 'local risk assessment' there are no set templates for these local risk assessments, although they must take into consideration:

- Prison type
- Prison Age (build/ structure)
- Prisoner demographics including category, age etc
- Relevant intelligence
- Emerging risks
- Current mitigation
- Local risk factors
- Outcome/s
- Access to potential escape equipment.

General

- 4.5 Governors must check that all staff are aware of their role in managing security and that they are familiar with and where to find the establishments LSS including the guidance and associated supporting tools.
- 4.6 Governors must provide annual assurance to their Prison Group Director (PGD) that the LSS is fit for purpose. Evidence of this annual assurance statement (Annex A) must be available and signed by both the PGD and Governor.
- 4.5 In signing this statement, it is for the PGD to satisfy themselves on the level of assurance they wish to apply to the LSS for prisons in their area. This level of assurance may vary between prisons in any area. The level of assurance should also be stated on the form (Annex A).
- 6.1 The minimum level of assurance is that PGDs must satisfy themselves that the key security outputs are set out adequately within the LSS, that they adhere to national policy and reflect local risks of establishments.
- 4.6 PGD's may also specify additional levels of assurance checks including examining some or all locally agreed LSS amendments; drawing on results from national security audits which may identify strengths and weaknesses in security procedures; results from local audits/assurance processes involving security systems; other records such as searching records; more detailed inspection of some or all of the LSS.
- 4.7 Establishments must ensure that a nominated person and deputy are responsible for updating the LSS; this will normally be the Head of Security and Security Custodial Manager.
- 4.8 Whilst it is important to ensure that all security procedures are conducted appropriately and take into consideration the safety of all in our establishments and of the public, to do this alongside a rehabilitative culture and with procedural justice considered throughout.

A Rehabilitative Culture is... ..all aspects of our culture being safe, decent, hopeful and optimistic about stopping offending.

Procedural Justice

- 4.9 There is good evidence that when people feel processes are applied and decisions are made fairly, they are more likely to trust authority figures, respect rules and follow them. This is called '**Procedural Justice**' (PJ), and it makes a difference even when outcomes are not in the person's favour or decisions do not go their way.
- 4.10 PJ is one of the foundational features of a rehabilitative prison; that is, it is a necessary part of an environment where all people feel safe and treated decently, and where they have the headspace and opportunity to change. Robust scientific evidence shows that when people feel treated in procedurally just ways, it contributes to a host of better outcomes, including well-being, rehabilitation/reduced recidivism, safety and stability.
- 4.11 Communicating in a PJ way should be the foundation of any establishment's security culture helping to improve safety for staff and prisoners, by significantly reducing violence and misconduct. What's more, because PJ is not a specific intervention or service, all our staff, in all grades and roles, can use procedural justice principles every day to improve outcomes.
- Procedural Justice - HMPPS Intranet (gsi.gov.uk)

- [Security & Rehabilitative Culture - YouTube](#)
- [Security & Rehabilitative Culture - HMPPS Intranet \(gsi.gov.uk\)](#) (*security information hub access required*)
- [Debias Decision Making](#)

State of Security

- 4.12 'State of Security' stems from the principle that Governors and Senior Managers know when they have a **good day** in their prison but may not always be able to break down the essential elements.
- 4.13 Assessing and understanding what makes our sites safe and secure provides us with the opportunity to enhance the 'now' and build resilience for the 'future' – nothing has demonstrated this better than the global pandemic of COVID-19. The tool allows you to reflect and take stock of your current state, and plan for a new response by understanding the story behind your data. It enables prison staff, as experts, to have a meaningful self-reflection on their individual prison culture with the emphasis on bringing existing information together in order to use it and think about it in a different way.
- 4.14 All establishments are advised to use the 'state of security' template and principles alongside the risk assessment guidance / process.
- [Security & Rehabilitative Culture - HMPPS Intranet \(gsi.gov.uk\)](#) (*security information hub access required (Annex B)*)

Prevention of Abscond - General

- 4.15 The LSS must outline procedures to assist with the prevention of abscond in the open estate.
- 4.16 Governors must ensure they have local contingency plans as per PSI 2014-09 Incident Management Manual detailing the actions to take in the event of any (attempted or actual) abscond.
- 4.17 Governors must ensure that all security documentation including assurance records are retained in line with Records, Information Management and Retention Policy
- 4.18 All staff must know what action to take in case of abscond, suspected abscond or attempted abscond.
- 4.19 Staff must raise an alarm if an immediate response is needed. There are several ways to raise the alarm, these include:
- General Alarm
 - Whistle
 - 'Urgent Message' on the radio net
 - Dial 222 from a landline
 - Personal alarm on the radio
 - Dial 999 if external to the establishment
 - Shouting for assistance.

Procedures to assist in the prevention of abscond

- 4.20 Absconds occur from a category D/ open prison, which have minimal security and allow eligible individuals to spend time away from the prison on licence to carry out work,

education or for other resettlement purposes. Absconds are reported when an individual unlawfully leaves a prison perimeter.

4.21 If an individual fails to return from Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL), this must be recorded as a temporary release failure, not an abscond.

4.22 Analysis of abscond data shows:

- In 2004 absconds were at an all-time high with 1301 absconds in that reporting year.
- Over the last 5 years (2016-2021) there were 588 absconds, an average of 117 per year.

4.23 Those who abscond may pose a significant threat to the public as well as to the reputation of HMPPS.

4.24 Implications for HMPPS:

- Reputational damage and significant erosion of public confidence.
- Negative impact on the relationships built with community businesses who form an integral part of the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals back into the community.
- Deterioration of staff and individual relationships.
- Requires additional resources which may place a strain on other areas of the establishment/service.

4.25 Consequences to the individual:

- Individuals who abscond face prosecution for escape from lawful custody, as well as potential further offences committed during this period.
- Once absconded, they are no longer able to return to open conditions for a period of two years from the point of recapture.
- The individual will be returned to closed conditions, with the chance of ROTL being greatly reduced along with reducing significant opportunities to reintegrate into society, build family ties and considerably less ability to build employment opportunities.
- The impact on those serving indeterminate sentences (lifer or ISPP) and who are eligible for parole is significant, leading to longer periods in closed conditions and a significant impact on their sentence progression and ultimately their release.

Prevention of abscond

4.26 Whilst there are no clear common characteristics that are predictive for individuals who abscond, establishments must ensure they have systems in place to review all prisoners who abscond in line with the national Abscond Review Process (Annex C), in order to increase understanding and any specific circumstances relevant to their establishment.

4.27 Open establishments must also have an Abscond Reduction Strategy in place specific to their establishment taking a four-step approach:

- Identify and understand the problem
- Actions
- Review, improve and revise
- Communication and engagement.

- 4.28 Abscond reduction strategies must be reviewed regularly; this will differ for individual establishments dependant on the rates of abscond and must be in line with the following timescales:
- Following each abscond
 - Once a month / quarterly for those establishments who have experienced absconds within the last 12 months
 - At least, once every 12 months for those establishments that do not experience any absconds in that period.
- 4.29 Abscond Reduction Strategies must take a 'whole prison approach', with representatives from all areas included in the development and review process.
- 4.30 Abscond Reduction Strategies must be uploaded to the LSS, to ensure all staff have access to the strategy.

5. Constraints

- 5.1 There are no dependencies between this policy framework and others.

Data Protection

- 5.2 Any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual recorded as a consequence of this framework will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation and PSI 04/2018 Records Information Management Policy. A full Data Protection Impact Assessment has been completed in support of this Prison Framework.

Freedom of Information Act

- 5.3 This document has been assessed as OFFICIAL and therefore suitable for public release. Any developed supporting tools will be marked as OFFICIAL SENSITIVE and will not be available for public release.

Diversity & Inclusion

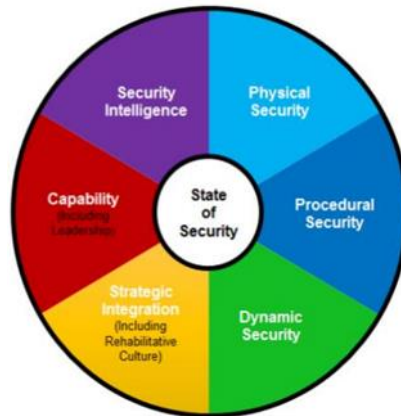
- 5.4 When communicating to staff, prisoners or visitors, establishments are expected to ensure that briefing documents and information is available in a variety of formats including easy read, braille, voice, and other languages.
- 5.6 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in support of this policy framework.

6. Guidance

NSF Risk Assessments

- 6.2 An evidence-based approach should be used determine the levels and frequency of processes and procedures dependent on the threat to individual establishment.
- 6.3 Establishments must take into account known deficiencies in security, good order or discipline and the security aims of the prison. The risk assessment must also include the quality of intelligence received within the establishment and factors which may indicate or pose a potential risk or threat to the security and/or safety of the establishment.

- 6.4 To support the evidence-based approach, establishments are encouraged to complete their own 'State of Security' assessments which has been identified as best practice in this area.



- 6.5 The concept of State of Security stems from the principle that Governors and Senior Managers know when they have a 'good day' in their prison but may not always be able to break down the essential elements.
- 6.6 State of Security aims to look beyond performance measures to establish how we achieve our security objectives against the baseline of a 'good' prison state. To help understand the state of a prison's security, consideration must be given to the components that make it up. This includes allowing prison staff, as experts, to meaningfully self-reflect on their prison's culture, rather than being over reliant on or governed by audit processes.
- 6.7 At all times, including during a crisis or extreme pressure, the stability of sites is paramount. When rapid changes are occurring, it has been essential for effective plans to be established to minimise the potential risk to the health of both staff and prisoners whilst ensuring that prisons remain safe, decent and secure.
- 6.8 Security & Rehabilitative Culture - HMPPS Intranet (gsi.gov.uk) (*security information hub access required (Annex B)*)

Understanding Absconds

- 6.9 Research has shown that the physical location of an establishment can have some impact on the amount of absconds. It appears that those closer to motorway infrastructure (HMP Thorn Cross, Sudbury, Kirkham) are more vulnerable to abscond when compared to those establishments that are geographically isolated.
- 6.10 The first few weeks of life in open conditions has been identified as a potential period of heightened abscond risk.
- 6.11 It is reported that the periods between evening (1700hrs) roll check and final (2000-2030hrs) roll check is when absconds appear to be more frequent. This is a four-hour window in which the individual who is absconding is not at work and has a significant amount of time before the establishment is able to notice that they have gone.
- 6.12 Data indicates that there is an increase in absconds closer to the Christmas period (November, December).
- 6.13 Absconding from custody appears to be motivated by a range of factors and there are no clear common causal characteristics that are predictive for individuals who abscond.
- 6.14 Whilst studies are limited and more research is needed, the following factors have been highlighted as being associated with reported absconds, based upon internal studies and

interviews with open estate Governors and Heads of Function conducted for the purpose of this guide:

- Inappropriate Allocations
- Adjustment to life in Open Conditions
- Debt & Substance Misuse
- Family Issues
- Lack of Reward & Punishment
- Hostile & Unsafe Environment.

Inappropriate allocations

- 6.15 There have been instances of individuals not suitable for open conditions, arriving with open adjudications, recent mobile phone finds, and incidents of violence to staff and others, also some men arriving directly from the Segregation Units in the closed estate or previous history of abscond.

Adjustment to life in open conditions

- 6.16 The transition from the closed environment to the open has been reported as often being difficult for some individuals.
- 6.17 Individuals who have spent significant amounts of time within the closed estate become accustomed to that environment and can then experience confusion, shock and a false sense of freedom during the initial adjustment to a more open environment. This can result in a struggle with the required levels of compliance and individual responsibility.
- 6.18 The lack of gradual transition, little or no planning and withdrawal from personal and professional supports creates a vulnerable psychological balance. Some individuals struggle with their identity and sense of belonging within an open prison, having previously developed a greater status amongst their peers within closed conditions.
- 6.19 Not being occupied or having a sense of immediate purpose and mastery can also impact on individuals' mood and stability.

Debt and substance misuse

- 6.20 Substance misuse is a problem in open conditions. A failed Mandatory Drug Test (MDT) or a developing drug debt may create a sense of panic which impacts on an individual's ability to make balanced and well thought out decisions. This therefore increases the likelihood of an abscond in anticipation of negative or undesirable consequences.
- 6.21 There is some evidence to suggest that absconds may also be motivated by a desire to avoid the presence of drugs in custody. Decisions to abscond, have at times reflected that individuals are prepared to risk the consequences of abscond rather than undermine the progress they have made in tackling their substance misuse.

Family Issues

- 6.22 Significant geographical distance between individuals and their family can have an impact on relationships, emotional state and progression, with can result in feelings of isolation. This geographical distance can be down to a number of factors. These include geographical spread of families, a lack of space in a local open establishment and/or the need for an individual to be allocated to a specific establishment due to offence type, further work/support or courses required to enhance future employment. Particularly in the women's estate where there are only two open prisons, geographical distance and

therefore isolation from families can be a considerable risk factor. It is also noted that receiving distressing news from their families can also instigate an abscond.

Lack of Reward and Punishment

- 6.23 A study suggested that individuals do not believe that a return to custody after a period of abscond is a significant punishment and are therefore undeterred. It also suggests that they see the time they spend in custody as non-rewarding and demotivating.

Hostile and unsafe environment

- 6.24 Individuals who feel unsafe and threatened are more likely to abscond from open conditions. This can be even more likely within a non-rehabilitative environment where staff and individual relationships are strained, and individuals feel unsafe.

Abscond Review

- 6.25 The national abscond review process should dovetail with abscond reduction strategies to assist in further development and understanding whilst promoting learning opportunities and reflections at both local and national levels.
- 6.26 The National Abscond Review Process will ensure:
- All absconds are subject to a formal Abscond Review, the guidance (Annex C) clearly sets out common standards enabling Governors and PGD's to make decisions on which report is proportionate to the circumstances surrounding individual absconds.
 - The guidance assists regional office staff to provide clear recommendations to PGD's.
 - Introduces a tiered approach to abscond reviews that provides both opportunity and active engagement for staff and managers within OMU's.
 - Requires a questionnaire to be completed by the establishment in every instance of Abscond where the individual is reported as unlawfully at large (UAL).
 - Strengthens HMPPS defensibility where serious further offences (SFO's) or other criminal offences are believed to have been committed.
 - Introduces standard terms of reference templates for higher level local and PGD Independent Reviews.
 - Introduces standard and report template with embedded guidance to assist reviewing managers for local and independent reviews (managers completing thematic reviews may refer to these for reference).
 - Sets out governance and ownership responsibilities and common timescales for completion of reports.
 - Ensures PGD and executive director offices can develop a complete library of abscond reviews for prisons within their group.
 - Outlines responsibilities relating to resourcing.
 - Provides an opportunity to develop a central library for all absconds including data sets that will enable further evaluation and learning as well provide responses to key questions relating to absconds.
 - Links directly to abscond reduction strategy development and learning; and
 - Provides interim reflection on abscond reduction strategies and provides additional tiering of assurance for Governors, PGDs and Executive Directors.

Abscond Reduction Strategy

- 6.27 To support managing the risk of absconds a four-part holistic approach abscond reduction strategy should be developed.



- 6.28 **Identify and Understand:**

Collect data

- Personal data (Core Records, C-NOMIS, OASys, Healthcare etc)
- Performance Reports (HMIP, IMB)
- Intelligence (IR's, Observation Books etc)
- Abscond Review and Debriefs - gather information on decision making, reasons for absconding etc
- Information from individuals who have absconded previously (e.g., anonymous resident surveys, focus groups)
- Research relevant to absconding.

Analyse data

- Examine the collated data to understand the problems. This can be done in three ways:
 - **Individually** – Who is absconding? What are their individual characteristics (age, offence type, background, relationship status, drug use, incentive level etc.? What are their motivations?
 - **Organisationally** – What is the overall stability of the establishment? What significant changes have occurred? (i.e., changes to Parole, ROTL, substance misuse, regime, staff training, changes in cohort, new technology introduction etc.)
 - The **Event** – When did it occur? Is there a trend? How did it occur? Where did it occur? Is there a certain spot that is vulnerable? Are we vulnerable at certain times of day? How long had they been gone before it was noticed?
- Bring together staff with diverse skill sets and background e.g., analytical skills and operational background, to collect and analyse the data. Consider the use of prisoners because of the knowledge that they have and the vulnerabilities that they see to harness their observations

Actions: - Abscond Reduction Action Plan

- Use the analysis of data to identify areas for improvement and create an Abscond Reduction Action Plan;
- Consider interventions relevant to what the data is highlighting; and
- The action plan can be managed through a specific meeting or incorporated into an existing meeting such as the security committee or senior management team. Membership of the committee should be able to deliver and account for the actions. Again, it may be worth considering the involvement of prisoners in this process.

Abscond Strategy

- 6.29 Many establishments produce their own individual Abscond Strategy. These strategies include processes and information for new individuals, along with individual support and risk management structures that aim to give every opportunity for successful progress to those in the open estate.

Screenings

- 6.30 All sending establishments are now required to conduct a check of the continued suitability for open conditions seven days prior to transfer and this must be recorded on DPS. A two-day post transfer check has been suggested to ensure all relevant assessments have been completed, including the seven-day check, and the prisoner does not have any risk indicators that were not adequately covered by the OASys review, DCS or the seven-day check.
- 6.31 Some prisons are requesting early access to Mercury Intelligence Reports, in order to give them a picture of some of the security issues that may arise from a potential allocation.
- 6.32 A number of establishments are using OASys ID screening to identify individuals with complex needs who may require support to adjust to their new surroundings more effectively.
- 6.33 A number of sites have introduced reception and transfer report screenings. These are designed to give a level of assurance that the prisoner has been appropriately allocated and that if any concerns are raised appropriate support can be provided.

New Arrivals

- 6.34 In a number of prisons welcome packs, including information about open establishments, are distributed to those in closed conditions to demonstrate the reality of the open estate, setting accurate expectations.
- 6.35 Some establishments are seeking to improve initial support - new arrivals are met in reception by Peer Mentors who are allocated to support those in the early days of their time in open conditions by taking them to internal appointments and offering them a guide around their new establishment.
- 6.36 The use of complex needs screening tools has helped some sites to identify specific needs which has enabled them to provide additional support to individuals.

6.37 Many prisons have sought to ensure timely allocations of Prison Offender Managers (POMs) and Personal Officers. This sets expectations and fills gaps in the information of individuals again making them more informed of their upcoming period in the open estate.

6.38 Ensuring that individuals OASys are updated within 8 weeks of arrival and prior to any release on ROTL.

Training/Raising Awareness

6.39 The implementation of the Five-Minute Intervention training has been carried out across the estate to improve rehabilitative culture and build staff individual relationships.

6.40 Some establishments have delivered roadshow events to individuals in the closed estate that discuss the realities and set expectations to those transferring to the open estate. These events discuss access to ROTL, employment, housing and opportunities to build family ties, as well as other unique opportunities that can be offered.

Support

6.41 Establishments have introduced a number of enhanced review and reporting systems to help support prisoners who they believe may be at risk of abscond. For instance: reviews at Reception and first night procedures, work with individuals who may complex or additional needs.

6.42 In some establishments initiatives such as 'Individual in Crisis' meetings have been introduced. These meetings give structure and support to those experiencing problems both internally (debt, bullying etc.) and externally (family issues etc.). Offering a forum to discuss and create an action plan rather than ignoring issues and thus increasing the potential for abscond. These meetings are also triggered by events such as parole knock backs, increased security intelligence or any changes in regime engagement.

6.43 Reviews of activity allocation has been undertaken in a number of sites to provide higher level of engagement from individuals and ensuring that residents receive worthwhile training and up-skilling for potential future employment.

6.44 Some establishments offer support for the visiting families.

Review, Improve and Revise

6.45 The Abscond Reduction Action Plan should be monitored and reviewed:

- How has the plan been implemented?
- Has it been effective?
- Examine the data, how has it impacted absconds numbers?
- What differences can we see?
- What trends can we see?

6.46 This process should be ongoing, and the action plan should be continuously under revisited.

Communication and Engagement

- 6.47 Engagement and communication between staff and individuals are crucial to identify potential factors that may trigger someone to abscond.
- 6.48 Ensure ongoing training and information distribution to staff and individuals to enhance rehabilitative culture with clear communication and decision making.
- 6.49 Provide people with an insight into the management of an establishment. This process will hopefully give those with concerns and issues a motivation to engage with staff and share concerns rather than absconding and is consistent with principles of Procedural Justice.
- 6.50 Learning and awareness can be shared in a wide variety of ways:
- Speak to new prisons arrivals about the risks of absconds and what they can do to help
 - Up-skill staff on what signs to look for, how to intervene and offer help and how to refer others for support
 - Consider the use of leaflets and newsletters that both inform and offer support
 - Raise awareness through community meetings, support groups, guidance committees, peer support groups
 - Use community notice boards to inform and update following the event of an abscond.
- 6.51 Consider appropriate signage for those who those with struggle with reading and writing to help them to process information.
- 6.52 The Crime in Prison Referral Agreement¹ provides when crimes must be reported to the police. Ensure open lines of communication with other agencies such as Police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). This will ensure a more joined up approach to the management of absconds and positive outcomes for all. On some occasions despite the Police recapturing individuals who have absconded, no further criminal justice outcome has been pursued.
- 6.53 Criminal justice partners have been consulted and the appropriate charge for this offense is Escape from Lawful Custody. If you are finding that this continues engagement with the local crime in prison force lead should be the first step, as well as notifying the local CPS area lead in order to ensure a collaborative approach. Should this issue persist, it would be appropriate to escalate any concerns and your detailed actions to HMPPS HQ via riskandcapabilitiesunit@justice.gov.uk .

¹ Microsoft Word - Crime in Prison Referral Agreement for publication.docx (publishing.service.gov.uk)

7. Annexes

Annex A	LSS Annual assurance statement
Annex B (Official Sensitive)	Security information hub application
Annex C	Abscond Review Process
Annex D (Official Sensitive)	Absconds Learning Guide
Annex E (Official Sensitive)	Absconds poster
Annex F (Official Sensitive)	Absconds slide pack
Annex G (Official Sensitive)	Absconds evidence summary