



Security Practice Guidance

ACCOMMODATION FABRIC CHECKS (Frontline Staff)

August 2021



PURPOSE

To support establishments in their recovery journey and help staff refresh and maintain their knowledge of effective Accommodation Fabric Checks (AFCs).



LEARNING

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, prisons have experienced significant disruptions to regimes and ways of working, requiring adaptations to policy and practice.

Staff from operational and other professions have shared concerns about the potential **loss of knowledge and experience in conducting basic, and key, security tasks**. An extended period of change appears to have caused uncertainty around how procedures should be applied and what they will look like as we move through the stages of recovery and return to a 'new normal'.



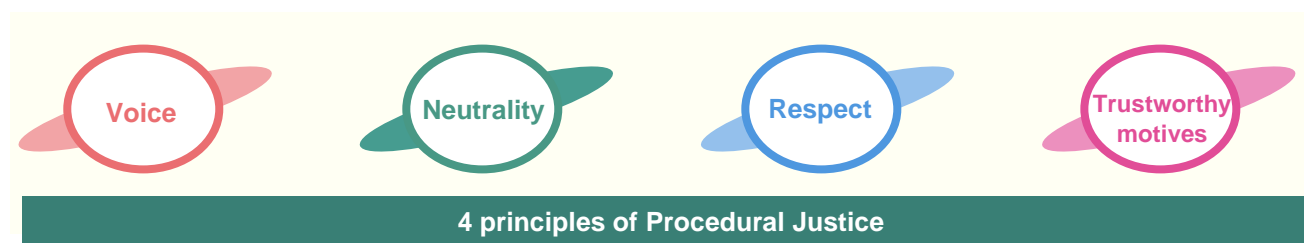
REFRESHING AND MAINTAINING PRACTICE

BEFORE

- Read the observation book – are there any issues of note on the unit you should be aware of prior to conducting the AFCs.
- Ensure you have the appropriate kit for your duties, including, gloves, radio, Body Worn Video Cameras etc.
- Inform your colleagues where you are going and what duties you are doing so they know where you are in the event of an incident.
- Consider the risk of confrontation that may be posed if there are prisoners on the landing. It may be useful for regular staff to accompany you to the cell as they may have a positive relationship with the prisoner.
- Shoot the bolt **BEFORE** you enter the cell. This will ensure the door will not shut and lock behind you.

DURING

The way that people perceive us to be using our authority makes a huge difference to whether they respect this, and the likelihood they will willingly cooperate and comply.



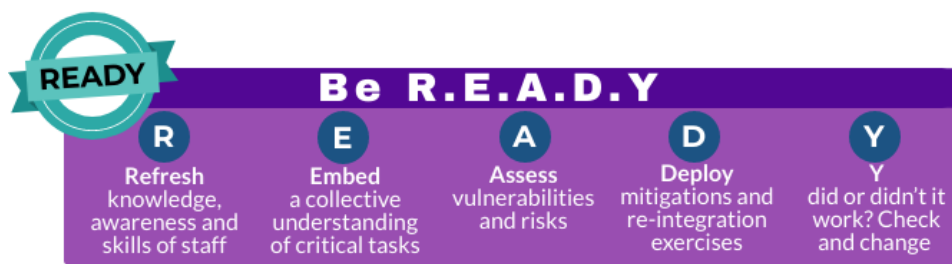
- Explain to prisoner what you are doing, ask them if everything works ok, is there hot water, toilet flush ok etc? Dialogue helps to break down barriers and encourages dynamic security. **RESPECT TRUSTWORTHY MOTIVES NEUTRALITY VOICE**
- Be respectful, this cell is a prisoner's only personal space whilst in custody. Acknowledge the prisoner and thank them for their cooperation. **RESPECT TRUSTWORTHY MOTIVES**
- Check:
 - That the cell is clean, decent and fit-for-purpose.
 - That there is nothing suspicious that would indicate, or aid, an escape attempt.
 - For any signs of paraphernalia (or smells) that would indicate drug use, or any other contraband.
 - That there are no offensive or provocative materials displayed (including pornography, racist or extremist symbols).
 - If posters are in designated areas and not covering exterior walls.
 - For evidence of excess kit or property, including duplicate items (e.g. kettles, TVs, bedding).
 - For evidence of reduced/limited property (which could indicate bullying).
 - Walls for sign of damage.
 - Underneath posters.
 - Fixtures and fittings e.g. is the bed fixed to the floor, have table and chairs been tampered with, are there any broken parts, are windows as they should be (i.e. no signs of damage, no external lines protruding from them).
 - The cell call system – does it sound and light externally on the wall panel.
 - That the light works (including the night light), light sockets and that there are no wire exposed.
 - TVs and radios, any sign of wire tampering/adaptation to charge phones.

AFTER

- If a problem is found, explain this to the prisoner including the process and timeframe for fixing the problem. **RESPECT TRUSTWORTHY MOTIVES NEUTRALITY**
- Advise colleagues of any change in location and update any necessary records (i.e. IRS for finds or Planet FM for repairs).

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Searching Policy Framework



Issued by

Risk and Capabilities Unit
Security, Order and Counter-Terrorism Directorate