

Safe Inside Prisons Charter

Updated 2025



The Professional Trade Union for Prison
Correctional, Public and Private Mental Health
Trust Services Providers and Immigration Services

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Safe Inside Prisons Charter - Updated 2025

The charter, developed by the Joint Unions in Prisons Alliance (JUPA), sets out the principles of a positive health and safety culture, management arrangements and safe working practices. These protect the long-term physical health, safety and mental wellbeing of all workers within our prisons, regardless of who they are employed by.

The charter outlines significant health and safety risks which the alliance seeks to work collaboratively with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) on to discuss concerns, ideas and solutions, agree actions and engage workers in promoting a healthy and safe working environment.

The key principles:

1. All workers are positively encouraged to raise any health and safety concerns. They should be assured they can do so without fear of suffering any detriment, irrespective of employer, and are provided with clear, sufficient information and guidance on the process to follow to raise concerns.
2. Thorough risk assessment of tasks, duties, activities and working spaces to establish effective safe staffing levels and other protective and precautionary measures to mitigate risks of violence, aggression, harassment and abuse of workers. This includes effective exchange of information between duty holders to enable effective safety management in consultation with trade unions. Audit and assurance processes that give oversight and appropriate levels of supervision and support to partner agencies and third party providers.
3. A zero-tolerance and action-based approach towards any form of violence, harassment or abuse of workers¹.
4. The prevention of sexual harassment² and sexual assault of all workers.
5. In the event of a worker being subject to any form of violence, aggression, harassment or abuse, HMPPS and/or third party employers ensure the worker is fully supported and offered specialist support. Emergency procedures in place and workers are trained on incident management arrangements for significant incidents.
6. All workers, partner agencies/third party providers, to be provided with access to a single HMPPS reporting system, with the ability to record all health and safety concerns including incidents, near misses or ill-health directly related to or effecting prison activities.
7. Reporting systems are accessible both internally and externally to enable individuals to report incidents outside of working hours or away from their workplace. Systems are not overcomplex and burdensome, to facilitate ease of reporting while capturing sufficient detail to allow follow up.

The importance of reporting all instances of violence, aggression, harassment or abuse is emphasised to all workers (including partner agencies/third party providers). Reporting systems are reviewed to ensure the facilitation of easy reporting of all levels of violence, aggression, harassment and abuse and recording

1 Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018

2 Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023

category options provided are suitable for the range of incidents that may be recorded including physical violence, verbal abuse and threatening behaviour (including protected characteristics), sexual assault and sexual harassment. All workers are positively encouraged to report all incidents, including non-physical aggression and verbal abuse.

8. All incidents reported (under principles 3 and 4) are reviewed, and action is taken to acknowledge each report. For all incidents of violence, aggression, harassment and abuse, a single point of contact is identified, to assure the worker(s) that their concerns are being addressed. The contact ensures workers are provided with updates on the progress of addressing the reported issue. Incident reports are shared with partner agencies and third party providers when reports are made by their directly employed workers.
9. All reported incidents are investigated by HMPPS. Swift, effective and appropriate action is taken, relevant to the incident severity level, either by the judicial process or internal procedures. In addition to building any case against the perpetrator, the incident investigation report will also seek to identify areas for improvement to prevent similar events occurring in the future. Partner agencies and third party providers are included and kept up to date on the investigation process and final report.
10. A proactive and robust approach is embedded to prevent and control the risk and spread of infectious diseases by complying with relevant health and safety legislation and guidance including the *Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002*, public health legislation and infection prevention and control protocols and guidance. Workers are positively supported to adhere to isolation requirements without financial detriment, to protect both the prison and wider community.
11. Control measures to prevent and control the risk of infectious diseases clearly outline immunisation requirements and how workers may access immunisations. Clear, concise information is provided to partner agencies/third party providers on risks and control measures to assist them in conducting risk assessments for their staff and implementing robust control measures. Where appropriate, immunisations and clear information on how to access them are made available for third party workers by HMPPS.
12. An embedded, proactive approach and commitment to preventing work-related stress, by utilising the *HSE Stress Management Standards*. Key stress factors are identified through staff surveys, focus groups and statistical data. Workers and trade union safety representatives are consulted to develop, monitor and review a combination of organisational, team and individual risk assessments which take account of the psychosocial hazards and stressors within the workplace which affect different employers/duty holders. Policy arrangements and action plans are developed and implemented which prioritise collective and preventative control measures. Relevant performance indicators are monitored and reviewed appropriately. Effective communication and co-operation between duty holders to prevent and control potential stress hazards and to ensure partner agencies and third party providers are factored into site wide stress risk assessments. Meaningful consultation with workers and trade union safety representatives and regular updates on any new actions and measures proposed in the workplace.

13. A culture of collaboration, maintained through partnership working between senior managers, managers and trade union safety representatives to manage health and safety risks - where concerns, ideas and solutions are freely shared and acted upon, and where the whole workforce is engaged in promoting a healthy and safe environment.
14. Effective mechanisms are in place to facilitate good co-operation and co-ordination between employers, to ensure robust health and safety management. Workers from partner agencies/third party providers are provided with comprehensive information on risks to their health, safety and wellbeing. All workers from partner agencies/third party providers receive a structured and detailed health and safety induction from HMPPS and their employer when commencing employment. This will identify mandatory training and instructions on how to access HMPPS-co-ordinated training. Regular updates from HMPPS will cover all health and safety related matters, including safety alerts, new protocols/ procedures, updated risk assessments and safe working procedures. There will also be consultations with workers, workers trade union safety representatives and partner agencies/third party providers on any proposed amendments to health and safety preventative measures, which affect their workers, prior to them being implemented.
15. All trade union safety representatives within a prison and those of partner agencies/third party providers who regularly attend site, or whose work is affected or directed by the activities of the prison, will be invited to attend and make representations to all regular or any additional health and safety committees and meetings. The minutes of scheduled and ad hoc health and safety committee meetings will be communicated to all trade union safety representatives and partner agency/third party providers. The trade union safety representatives' employer will make every effort to enable their attendance, afford them paid time away from their normal duties and a corresponding adjustment to workloads to facilitate their attendance at the meeting. (In the event of representatives being unable to attend, they will forward their apologies to the administrator of a meeting, and a written report will be accepted in their absence and referenced within the minutes of that meeting.)
16. The working environment is of a suitable size and appropriate for the intended activity. It is well maintained and meets statutory compliance and other regulatory requirements. Particular attention is paid to keeping the environment clean, hygienic and well-ventilated to ensure that contact surfaces, equipment and the air workers breathe, is as so far as is reasonably practicable free from substances hazardous to health, including pathogens.
17. All workers are protected from secondary exposure to psychoactive substances through robust risk assessment and management arrangements. All workers are actively encouraged to report suspected psychoactive substances exposure, incidents are investigated and appropriate first aid/medical treatment and support (during and post-incident) is provided to workers.

18. Robust asbestos management arrangements are in place for buildings where duty holder requirements apply, particularly in high risk areas and for when emergency situations arise. There is clarity on roles and responsibilities and good communication and co-operation between all employers on asbestos management arrangements for buildings where the duty holder role is not held by the employer. Asbestos management plans are shared widely and clearly displayed in the workplace. Trade union safety representatives are consulted on asbestos safety management arrangements. Risk assessment and asbestos surveys are reviewed every 6-12 months (or more frequently in high risk areas). All workers are provided with asbestos information and awareness including whether it is present in their building/working area and what to do if they suspect asbestos may be damaged or disturbed.
19. Continual improvement and proactive management of health and safety through partnership working with trade union safety representatives to undertake a programme of planned workplace inspections on a 3-monthly basis. Inspection findings and clear actions reported through the established local health and safety committee. Duty holders have effective and robust audit and assurance processes in place and demonstrate commitment to work towards continuous improvement and best practice in health and safety management.
20. In signing and enacting the principles within the charter, employers demonstrate their positive commitment to working in partnership with trade unions and send a clear message of their genuine commitment to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of their workers to feel 'Safe Inside'.

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