

Significant Risk of Serious Harm to Others Policy

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Alternative Formats

This documentation can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disk, audio tape or in an ethnic-minority language upon request. Requests for alternative formats can be made to the Probation Board using the following contact information:

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1. Rationale

Many service users have the potential to harm others; and probation officers assess and manage such risks every day. However, managing risk of harm requires PBNI to target the most intensive use of resources at those service users considered to pose a Significant Risk of Serious Harm to Others. This policy is in place to ensure that risk of harm is managed effectively and appropriate resources are in place to manage it.

2. Policy Aim

The aim of this policy is to contribute to public protection by reducing service users' likelihood to harm others through ensuring there is effective assessment and management of significant risk of serious harm posed by service users.

3. Objectives

- To have clear processes in place to identify those service users who pose a Significant Risk of Serious Harm to others.
- To have clear processes in place which address the risks posed in a way which is lawful, necessary, defensible and proportionate.
- To ensure that the appropriate resources are available for cases assessed as posing a Significant Risk of Harm to Others.
- To ensure there is appropriate supervision, training and support provided to all employees in assessing and managing Significant Risk of Serious Harm to Others cases.
- To ensure that all staff are aware that accountability for decision making in the assessment and management of Significant Risk of Serious Harm is an agency responsibility, and not solely that of an individual employee.

4. Programmes and Projects

Significant Risk of Serious Harm procedures are in place.

5. Definitions

The Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 defines 'serious harm', and makes provision for public protection sentences for offenders assessed by courts as being dangerous. Release into the community, in such cases will be dependent on evidenced risk reduction while in custody: the timing of release will be decided upon by Parole Commissioners.

“Serious Harm”: Death or serious personal injury, whether physical or psychological.

“Significant”: The likelihood that an act, the impact of which would be serious harm, will occur i.e there is a high probability of an offence causing serious harm recurring

“Significant Risk of Serious Harm”: PBNi assesses a service user as presenting a Significant Risk of Serious Harm if there is a high likelihood that a service user will commit a further offence, causing serious harm.

The Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 sets out a list of serious offences in Schedule 1 and a list of specified sexual and violent offences in Schedule 2. A service user who commits a specified offence and whom the court assesses as dangerous will meet the criteria for a public protection sentence. As a further guideline, the following offences are considered to involve serious harm (includes inchoate offences such as attempts, conspiracy, aid/abet):

- Murder
- False Imprisonment/Kidnapping
- Manslaughter
- Rape/Other serious sexual offence
- Arson / criminal damage endangering life
- GBH
- Malicious wounding
- Any offence involving use of weapons where serious harm has been caused
- Motoring Offences endangering life (including car crime)

6. Resources

There are no significant additional costs involved.

7. Communications and Training

There will be training in relation to the Significant Risk of Serious Harm to Others Policy and Procedures delivered to all frontline staff in 2021. Ongoing training will be delivered through the team meeting structure with the Area Manager taking the lead. The Assistant Director, Risk will forward communication to all relevant staff advising of the updated Policy and Procedures.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed four years from the date of approval. Interim

reviews may also be prompted by feedback, and or identified changes in practice.

9. Non compliance

Breach of the Board's Policy and Procedures by employees may merit consideration under the Board's Disciplinary Policy

