

Older people in prison

.....
A monitoring guide for IMBs
.....



Contents

Letter from the Chair	2
Older people in prison – the fastest-growing section of the prison population	3
Who are older people in prison?	3
What problems do older people in prison face?	3
How can you recognise good practice in support for older people in prison?	4
Monitoring checklist for IMBs	5
Examples of good practice for older people in prison	6
What resources are there to help the prison?	8

July 2011

Dear Chair

Older people in prison – an item for your next Board agenda

Many of you will have attended the 2010 IMB conference at which Stuart Ware from Restore 50plus gave a presentation on the care needs of older people in prison.

As you are no doubt aware, the number of older people in prison has increased to the point where they are now the fastest growing group in the prison estate. This increase is likely to continue, due in part to harsher sentencing policy.

Age UK supports an Older People in Prison Forum (OPIPF) to bring together interested parties from the statutory and voluntary sector. I am enclosing copies of a monitoring guide for your board's information and attention and ask that you please consider having this as an item on your next IMB agenda. I hope that your board will want to monitor what is actually in place to meet the needs of older prisoners in your establishment. Some boards have already included concerns about older prisoners in their annual reports.

On 31 March 2010 there were 7,751 male prisoners and 369 female prisoners aged over 50 in England and Wales and 2,246 of these were serving indeterminate or life sentences.

Some questions that every board should ask include: Does your prison have a policy for older prisoners and is it implemented? Are there age-related assessments for older prisoners on reception with regular reviews? What are the issues for older prisoners and should these be highlighted in your annual report? Could your governor find some ways and funding, where appropriate, to address the needs of older prisoners?

I hope that you will find the monitoring guide and checklist a useful aid for your board to seek ways to monitor the regimes and care for older prisoners in your establishment.

Yours faithfully,

Gill Walker

Chair

Older People in Prison Forum

Author: Nick Le Mesurier www.nicklemesurier.org

Editor: Gill Walker, Chair, Older People in Prison Forum

Older people in prison forum

Older people in prison – the fastest-growing section of the prison population

This guide is designed to help IMBs draw attention to the needs of older men and women in prison. It describes why older people are a significant minority with special needs and provides a checklist to help identify where care may be falling short of good standards. It offers some indicators to help you recognise good practice. It is written in a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) format to help you find the information you need quickly. This is sent to you from the Older People in Prison Forum (OPIPF) hosted by Age UK. The purpose of the forum is to co-ordinate and stimulate activity, aimed at improving the lives of older offenders by bringing together statutory and voluntary sector organisations with an interest. It is written mainly for Independent Monitoring Boards (IMBs) who operate independently, to ensure that people in custody are treated fairly and humanely and are prepared for release.

Who are older people in prison?

Any prisoner aged 50 years and over may be considered to be an ‘older prisoner’. This is because many older people in prison have a physical health status of ten years older than their contemporaries in the community.

Facts

- Currently about 8,000 or almost one in ten prisoners is an older prisoner. The vast majority are male, but about 350 are female.
- Older prisoners can be found anywhere within the adult prison estate.
- They are the fastest-growing section of the prison population. Most are serving long sentences for serious crimes.

What problems do older people in prison face?

There is no explicit Prison Service Instruction (PSI) or Order (PSO) that supports effective commissioning for older people in prison. Any reference is to Prison Service Order 2855 – Prisoners with Physical, Sensory or Mental Disabilities – and contains scant reference to the general care and well-being of older prisoners. Only a few prisons (e.g. HMP Downview) have developed their own older offenders policy. The Green Paper, *Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders* makes no mention of older prisoners.

Facts

- The prison environment is primarily designed for, and inhabited by, young and able-bodied people.
- Most older people in prison are serving long sentences. About 40 per cent are detained for sex offences and will be released under Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) supervision.
- Older people in prison are generally a compliant population who suffer poor mental and physical health.
- Prison staff generally lack training in the needs and rights of older people.
- There is currently very limited provision for specialist long-term and end-of-life health care within prisons.
- Many older prisoners are released without adequate preparation or support.

How can you recognise good practice in support for older people in prison?

- The prison should know how many people are aged 50 and over and where they are accommodated.
- There should be evidence that the prison is aware of the Equality Act 2010 and the duty it imposes to promote age equality and to outlaw harmful age discrimination.
- The prison should be able to demonstrate that it takes into account age-related problems in its reception screening processes, with regular reviews in accommodation and with rehabilitation programmes.
- The prison should provide and encourage access for older prisoners to all necessary facilities, providing focused activities where appropriate, including exercise, education, therapy and recreation with pathways for good health care. Where the physical infrastructure of the prison does not allow adaptation, alternative means of provision should be available (e.g. in-cell exercise programmes, buddy schemes).
- The prison should provide sufficient aids to assist older prisoners, such as grab rails in cells and showers, wheelchairs and other mobility aids.
- Information on age-related problems should be available within the prison and accessible to prison staff and prisoners. This may take the form of printed literature (e.g. leaflets and factsheets available from Age UK and elsewhere) or direct contact with prison staff or external agencies.
- Prison staff should be trained in awareness of age-related problems, such as signs and symptoms of depression, cognition, mobility problems and other health issues. They should know how, when and where to refer these problems.
- The prison should provide the means by which older prisoners may contribute positively to the prison regime, for example, through older prisoners' forums.
- The prison should be aware that perceptions of old age among some prisoners may invite bullying.
- The prison should encourage and promote links with external agencies, such as Age UK, local authority adult social services, and other specialist agencies.
- The prison should have copies of
 - *Resource Pack for Working with Older Prisoners and Working with Older Prisoners Workshop* (Nacro)
 - *Supporting Older People in Prison: Ideas for practice* (Age UK)
 - *Doing Time: Good practice with older people in prison –the views of prison staff* (Prison Reform Trust)
 - *A Pathway to Care for Older Offenders: A toolkit for good practice* (Department of Health 2007)

Questions for IMBs to ask	Yes	No	Action and comment
1 How many older people are in the prison? i.e. People who are over 50, over 60 over 70 and over 80? Is there a list for up-to-date numbers?			
2 In the absence of a Prison Service Order for older prisoners, does the prison have its own policy for older prisoners?			
3 Does the prison have an older prisoners' forum?			
4 Are the needs of older people assessed on induction? Are there ongoing reviews?			
5 Is there a monitoring system to ensure assessed needs are being met?			
6 Are there specific age-related assessments for education?			
7 Are older people consulted regularly? Is this ongoing?			
8 Are older people unlocked for the core day?			
9 Is the prison regime accessible to all older people?			
10 Are adapted offending behaviour programmes available?			
11 Are age-appropriate activities available?			
12 Are there good links with community groups?			
13 Are there good links with social services for resettlement?			
14 Are adult social services alerteded at least 12 weeks in advance before the release of an older person with health or social care needs?			
15 Do prison staff undertake any awareness training on older people's needs?			
16 What is the pay for prisoners of pensionable age who are not working? Is it reasonable?			
17 Is there a Disability Liaison Officer?			
18 What steps does the prison take to meet the needs of older prisoners, with a focused regime of activities?			
19 Where an earned privilege is not accessible to a prisoner, does the prison ensure that a comparable privilege is available?			
20 If the prisoner has a disability, what steps are taken to meet their needs?			

Examples of good practice for older people in prison

Not all practice for older prisoners is poor, but good practice is patchy and often due in part to the initiatives of a few individuals. Many schemes are provided in partnership with other organisations such as Age UK and RECOOP. The following list is by no means exhaustive.

- **An older offenders’** policy can provide a clear focus on the needs of older people in prison and provide a framework for care and support. It can define minimum standards and specify how they will be met.

HMP Downview (women’s prison) has a detailed Older Offenders’ Policy which is based on survey data as well as health and prison service policy. It identifies facilities for a dedicated wing for older people and for improved shower areas and bathrooms. It commits the prison to reducing the number of falls and to promoting greater opportunities for activities within a more relaxed regime, and also promoting case conferences for resettlement prior to discharge.

- **Buddy schemes** provide one-to-one support of frail or disabled prisoners by carefully selected and trained prisoners. Buddies provide help in accessing meals or helping to keep a prisoner’s cell clean and tidy. They do not provide personal care. Prisons in which buddy schemes are established include HMP Hull and HMP Dartmoor.

- **Older prisoners’ forums** are established in a number of prisons. They are formally constituted and governed by elected officers. They may take a variety of forms under various names. Older prisoners’ forums are able to provide formal representation and to contribute to Measures of Quality of Prison Life (MQPL). Prisons in which older prisoners’ forums are established include HMP Channings Wood, HMP Leyhill, HMP Dartmoor, HMP Hull.
- **Health screening programmes** for older prisoners may form part of the common induction programme, but should also be provided at regular intervals. They should include mental as well as physical health checks and enable referral to further assessment and treatment as required.

HMP Stafford provides a number of clinics dedicated to, or including, older people in prison. These include the over-55s well-man clinic, which provides comprehensive mental and physical health checks using a prison-specific screening tool; twice weekly physiotherapy clinic and assessment for equipment and cell organisation, vaccination clinic and an anxiety clinic. There is a regular day club for retired prisoners. Links have been established with local authority social services, and student placements have been held at the prison.

- **Health promotion** within prison may take the form of direct interventions from health care, such as smoking cessation programmes, diabetes awareness and healthy eating. Older prisoners often need general programmes to be adapted to their needs and abilities, for example, seniors’ gym sessions or in-cell exercise programmes.

HMP Coldingley in Surrey has used new age kurling and new age bowls kits as part of a physical exercise programme provided by Age UK's 'fit as a fiddle'. New age kurling and bowls have now become embedded in the prison's exercise programme, continuing on a regular basis.

HMPs Exeter, Channings Wood and Dartmoor offer a healthy living programme and a dedicated mental-health support service (provided in partnership with RECOOP).

HMP Shepton Mallet provides a health support worker to offer various physical and mental health exercises for older prisoners (provided in partnership with RECOOP).

HMP Downview provides yoga and other activities, additional health supplements and fruit and vegetables for older women. A dedicated senior officer leads the group.

- **Day services** provide an opportunity for older prisoners, especially those who are retired and do not work, or do not seek opportunities to leave their cells or the wing. They meet together as a peer group for activities, education, or simply to relax. Day services provide excellent 'out of cell' opportunities to offer advice and information, individually and in group sessions; health care, talks and 'through the gate' support. They can also provide a forum by which older prisoners can feed in to the prison regime.

HMP Dartmoor provides comprehensive support to older people in the prison, including a wheelchair repair service on behalf of the Red Cross and an over-50s club in which crafts, activities, chair-based exercises and basic life skills are taught. Older prisoners are mainly located on one two-storey wing. A small supply of clothing is available to give to those older people who need it on release.

HMP Eastwood Park is a local/remand prison for women in which RECOOP provides a regular venue for older women to meet together as a group for discussions, poetry and craft sessions. These are linked in with the Nine Pathways of Reduction of Re-offending.

HMP Stafford provides a regular day service for older men who are retired or unable to work.

At **HMP Downview** and **HMP Send**, older women have regular meetings.

HMP Hull, HMP Nottingham, HMP Norwich and **HMP Wymott** provide dedicated day services and through-the-gate support in conjunction with local Age UK and Age Concern organisations.

- **Information and advice** is vital for everyone to maintain a sense of integrity and responsibility. Many older prisoners need information and advice for themselves and their older relatives and friends, such as how to access pensions, travel passes or to use modern technology such as plastic cards. Information and advice should be available in printed form, but may also be required through direct provision, particularly for those with more complex concerns or who have literacy and numeracy problems

Age UK has a well established information and advice service that can be accessed by anyone and is delivered directly in some prisons. Information can include preparing a will, pensions, benefits advice and keeping well in older age. Leaflets and up-to-date impartial factsheets are available free of charge from 0800 169 65 65 and can be obtained online at www.ageuk.org.uk/ publications. Prisons in which a dedicated information service is provided include HMP Hull, HMP Dartmoor, HMP Norwich, HMP Bristol, HMP Wymott, HMP Leicester and HMP Nottingham.

What resources are there to help the prison?

Awareness of the needs of older people in prison is slowly growing and there are a number of reports, guides and training packs available.

Have you seen them or used them as a basis for discussion?

- *Supporting Older People in Prison: Ideas for Practice* (Age UK 2011) presents a thematic description of the work being done by Age UK in a number of prisons, and a list of useful contacts.
- Nacro has produced a resource pack for working with older prisoners and working with older prisoners workshop (Nacro 2009) which contains information on the needs of older people in prison and guidance on activities and training materials for prison staff.
- Prison Reform Trust published *Doing Time: Good practice with older people in prison* (PRT 2010) which is based on extensive research with prison staff.
- HMIP published a report, *No Problems: Old and quiet* (2004) and a follow-up (2008), which outlines in detail issues affecting older people in prison.

The following organisations can provide help directly to older people in prison.

Action for Prisoners' Families (APF)

(www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk)

Older prisoners are part of family networks as much as younger people. APF represents the views and experiences of its members – organisations providing direct services to the families of people in prison – as well as of families themselves. APF supports the development of new and existing services; promotes good practice on working with prisoners, their children and families both in prison and in the community; publishes information; influences policy; and raises awareness of the impact of imprisonment on children and families.

Age UK

(www.ageuk.org.uk)

Age UK supports a national body, the Older People in Prison Forum, and is represented on the Older Prisoners' Action Group at the Department of Health. Some local Age UKs and Age Concerns (www.ageuk.org.uk/about-us/local-partners) work closely with a number of prisons in partnership with health and social services and other voluntary organisations. The range of services in prisons includes day services and in-reach services, information and advice services, advocacy, health care, social groups, and training on awareness of older people's needs, applied to the prison service.

Combat Stress

(www.combatstress.org.uk)

Combat Stress delivers dedicated treatment and support to ex-service men and women with conditions such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety disorders.

FaithAction

(www.faithaction.net)

A national network of faith-based and community organisations. FaithAction includes over 1,000 organisations which range from those who are involved in some sort of social action to those who are delivering public services. A number of members work with ex-offenders to provide mentoring services so that when they are released from prison they have guidance and support.

NACRO

(www.nacro.org.uk)

The leading crime-reduction charity dedicated to making society safer. NACRO has recently published *A Resource Pack for Working with Older Prisoners*, and *Working With Older Prisoners Workshop* which contain detailed information on the needs of older people in prison and guidelines on activities and training materials for prison staff.

Prison Reform Trust

(www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk)

An independent charity working to create a just, humane and effective penal system. It examines the way prisons are working; gives information to prisoners, staff and people outside; and promotes positive change within the penal system. It has published a number of influential reports on older people in prison, including *Doing Time: Good practice with older people in prison – the views of prison staff*.

Restore 50plus

(www.olderprisoners.org.uk)

A voluntary, peer-led mentoring and support network based on concepts of responsibility, reconciliation and restorative justice. Founded in 1996 by a group of older people in Bedford and the Mount and Lincoln prisons, Restore 50 plus has since supported over 350 network members to remain crime free on their release from prison and to successfully resettle in their local communities throughout the UK. It is in the process of becoming a charitable company and may be contacted on 07742 377744 or at Footprints House, 3 North Square, Dorchester DT1 1HY.

Resettlement and Care of Older Offenders and Prisoners (RECOOP)

(www.acoop.org.uk)

RECOOP promotes the care, resettlement and rehabilitation of offenders and ex-offenders. It provides support services that will enable them to take control of their lives, and prevent them from re-offending and becoming socially excluded. Services include advocacy, financial advice, mentoring on issues such as employment and training, and advice on housing and health RECOOP developed out of the Age Concern Older Offenders Project (ACoop), and is part of Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (www.bcha.org.uk).

The Royal British Legion

(www.britishlegion.org.uk)

Helps serving and ex-service personnel and their families. It provides welfare services, including direct help to older prisoners in the form of aids and equipment, advice and information, and in some cases help with resettlement.

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) Forces Help

(www.ssafa.org.uk)

A national charity that helps and supports former and currently serving members of the armed forces and their families. It provides health and social care, housing and in-reach services to ex-offenders on release and in-reach services, including pre-release preparation.

Women in Prison

(www.womeninprison.org.uk)

Provides dedicated support to women of all ages, both in prison and through the gate, to help in resettlement. Women in Prison works in all prisons in the women's estate. The forms of help include advice and support on housing, education, mental health, legal rights, work, benefits, debt, domestic violence, substance misuse, and more.

Tavis House
1–6 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9NA
0800 169 80 80
www.ageuk.org.uk



Age UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England (registered charity number 1128267 and registered company number 6825798). The registered address is 207–221 Pentonville Road, London N1 9UZ. Age Concern England (registered charity number 261794) and Help the Aged (registered charity number 272786), and their trading and other associated companies merged on 1 April 2009. Together they have formed the Age UK Group, dedicated to improving the lives of people in later life. The three national Age Concerns in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have also merged with Help the Aged in these nations to form three registered charities: Age Scotland, Age NI and Age Cymru. ID10735 07/11