

What to do if you have been asked to escort, supervise, search prisoners or sign prisoners into education

UCU **does not** believe that education staff should perform any of the roles of prison officers including signing in, wandering/searching and escorting.

Despite maintaining that position, it can sometimes be difficult to persuade employers that we shouldn't be undertaking those duties.

So should you, or a member of your team be asked to escort, supervise, search or sign-in prisoners, this is what you should do.

There are four key documents you will need to access:

1. PSI 13/2011 Control of Internal Movement Function - Management and Security of Communication/Control Rooms and Internal Prisoner Movement, section 6.0 'Internal Movement' - <http://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis/prison-service-instructions-2011>
2. PSI 07/2016 Searching of the person, annex A 'Powers of search' - <http://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis/prison-service-instructions-2016>
3. local security strategy specific to each prison.
4. local searching strategy specific to each prison.

Escorting or supervising prisoners

All internal movement of prisoners must be risk assessed locally and the relevant level of control and supervision provided to maintain security, control, order and safety. The PSI draws a distinction between main movements and individual ad hoc movement of prisoners, but all types of movement must be risk assessed. Any risk assessment on internal movement must refer to and be consistent with the local security strategy and must be jointly carried out with the UCU health & safety rep. There must also be a safe system of work in place, which is a procedure to eliminate the identified risk(s) involved in an operation or if elimination is not possible, then, at least, to reduce the risk(s) to an acceptable level. **SO ASK TO SEE THE RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK.**

No one should be escorting or supervising staff if they haven't had the appropriate training and a joint (UCU and employer) risk assessment has been conducted producing a safe system of work.

You should never conduct an 'external escort' outside of the secure confines of the prison. The risk assessment requires two prison officers to be part of such an escort.

Searching prisoners

Searches of prisoners should only be conducted by trained personnel with the authorisation of the governor or director. There should be a risk assessment in place for this activity which should reference and be consistent with the local security and searching strategies and was drawn up with the UCU health & safety rep. There must also be a safe system of work in place, which is a procedure to eliminate the identified risk(s) involved in an operation or if elimination is not possible, then, at least, to reduce the risk(s) to an acceptable level. **SO ASK TO SEE THE RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK.**

Signing prisoners into education

This activity is not part of the duties listed in tutors/lecturers/teachers/trainers/learning support practitioners' contracts of employment. There should be a risk assessment in place for this activity which should reference and be consistent with the local security and searching strategies. There must also be a safe system of work in place, which is a procedure to eliminate the identified risk(s) involved in an operation or if elimination is not possible, then, at least, to reduce the risk(s) to an acceptable level. **SO ASK TO SEE THE RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK.**

General

All staff who have contact with prisoners should be trained in aspects of safety and security relevant to their role.

If any person in the prison does not feel confident or safe in dealing with any prisoner or prisoners they should raise the matter with their line manager.

Any person working in a prison should be aware of their personal safety at all times and they should ask for assistance if at any time it is needed. In any emergency, they should use the emergency procedures of the prison in order to raise the alarm.

You should raise any concerns through your line manager/education manager/head of education or the management of the prison where these concerns arise. All prison governors and directors are aware of security requirements under the relevant prison service instructions and orders and HMPPS national security framework. Local security requirements are managed under the prison's local security strategy which must incorporate mandatory policy requirements, including those within the National Security Framework, PSOs and PSIs.