

Preventing Negative Prison Cultures – Staff Learning Course

This bespoke learning course aims to complement the National Offender Management Service's prison training for all new recruit custody officers and existing staff in public and private sector prisons, young offenders' institutions and secure training centres.

Course overview

This course is designed principally to raise awareness for delegates, serve as a preventative measure and eradicate any potential negative cultures that can/will/do exist within prisons. These cultures are extremely hard to identify and generally, they will not be found or picked up by any inspector.

However, BBC reporter Rob Charles proved that these cultures and practices do exist. The unique content and delivery of this course is based on Rob's findings and what he exposed at Medway Secure Training Centre (STC), where he went undercover as a custody officer for BBC Panorama. The culture of abuse and mistreatment at Medway is not a special case or an isolated incident, which is why this important learning has been designed for all prison facilities and staff.

These cultures can be extremely damaging to the prison, its staff and inmates, with management, inspectors and Ofsted not even aware they exist. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons could not find any evidence and Ofsted went as far as to give Medway STC ratings of good and even excellent in times of neglect, abuse, riots, and incident misreporting.

How can this learning help to achieve changes in negative staff behaviour and hidden cultures of unprofessional practice?

A new and improved culture: By implementing an awareness program **(to both staff and inmates)**, the learning will create a new culture of openness and trust among staff and provide better levels of care for inmates. This can empower new recruits to speak out about any practices they don't feel comfortable with.

It will also make established staff, that may be part of a negative culture, question their negative practice while sending out a message to existing, perpetrating staff that their behaviour is being watched and will no longer be tolerated. It also empowers existing staff who would have previously 'turned a blind eye' to take the appropriate action.

It will lead to the provision of a new whistleblowing platform to identify mistreatment and wrongdoing. The more frequently this bespoke learning is delivered, the more effective and productive the prisons will become by ensuring a thriving positive culture exists. Success will be achieved by:

- Empowering staff and inmates to identify/challenge and report negative behaviours
- Making the perpetrating staff question their wrongdoing and negative behaviours to a point where they change their patterns and form part of the new cycle or leave
- Creating a new, open, positive culture among staff and inmates, where unprofessional conduct and negative behaviours are not tolerated

This learning course has been designed to align with the following objectives and principles from Her Majesty's Prison Services:

- Reducing the risk of prisoners re-offending
- Providing safe and well-ordered establishments in which we treat prisoners humanely, decently and lawfully

- Promote diversity, equality of opportunity and combat unlawful discrimination
- Ensure our staff have the right leadership, organisation, support and preparation to carry out their work effectively

Course Objectives:

This bespoke and informative full-day workshop will complement the initial training for new recruits, as well as refresher training to existing officers, all prison floor staff and senior management. It will include interactive sessions, role plays, first-hand experience of the hidden cultures that can exist and never-before-seen examples of mistreatment and negative practices.

The learning will ensure new recruits are fully prepared for a long and successful career in justice and rehabilitation, the culture that could face them and how to prevent it. It also aims to ensure new and existing staff are not getting lost within the pressures and stresses of their demanding roles.

As these negative cultures are widespread across many prisons and not exclusive to a specific facility, this learning will provide delegates with the knowledge and necessary tools to identify and deal with the specific problems of these cultures if/when they arise, at any institution they may work at. This in turn will help in moving the prison service, staff and inmate experience forward in a positive, rehabilitative light. While the course will be delivered in separate classes for new recruits and existing staff, the level of learning and content will be the same for all delegates, from the prison floor to senior management.

Objectives of the learning for *new recruit* attendees:

- Complete working knowledge of a negative culture
- How to identify these cultures
- How to prevent these behaviours from happening to them/others
- Who to talk to and the correct action to take

Objectives of the learning for *established staff member* attendees:

- Confidence that the awareness of negative practices is being addressed and a new open culture of taking action against malpractice is being employed
- How to identify and change these cultures
- How to prevent these behaviours from happening to them/others
- Who to talk to and the correct action to take
- Empower existing personnel to challenge the key issues and practices that should be considered for escalation/'speaking up'
- Identify a consistent and coherent approach of accurate and honest reporting

Objectives to benefit *the prison*:

- Reduce legitimate use of force application
- Reduce/eliminate unnecessary use of force
- Reduce staff turnover and improve staff retention
- Improve staff wellbeing
- Improve inmate wellbeing
- Create a happier and safer work environment for staff
- Create a happier and safer living environment for inmates
- Improve the prison's operational efficiency
- Improve prison incident report accuracy
- Reduce inmate reoffending rates by improving the rehabilitation model
- Improve prison reputation and standards

Guiding principles of the learning strategy

- Appropriate learning and support should be delivered to all prison staff that practice and oversee prison protocol. The programme will be underpinned by good and best practices of inmate and incident management and learning principles to provide a supportive and logical learning path and enable development of staff competence in identifying and preventing negative cultures
- Learning should be delivered with new custody officer induction to ensure skills and knowledge are retained and put into practice on commencement of their role
- Learning should be delivered to existing custody officers, prison staff and senior management to ensure a collaborative approach to running the prison and the cultivation of a team environment, where skills and knowledge are retained and put into practice straight afterward
- Learning will have interactive, practice based components to engage participants and consolidate learning
- Learning should be evaluated in terms of both the staff satisfaction and their competence in identifying and preventing negative behaviours. This measure ensures that all staff complete learning with a sense of confidence and comfort and helps reduce on-the-job support demands and errors in practice.
- Assessment will form an important component of the learning programme. Success of the learning course will be measured by before and after analysis of staff job satisfaction levels, staff retention and reporting statistics including, but not limited to:
 - Restraint incidents
 - Number of incidents in the prison
 - Use of force incidents
 - Staff surveys and feedback mechanisms
- Contribution to the learning process will come from a variety of sources including a qualified and experienced custody officer who exposed cultures of mistreatment while working undercover at a prison for teenagers, delivery team, behavioural therapists, de-escalation specialists, etc.

Audience

The course is principally aimed at:

- Trainee custody officers/new recruits
- All floor staff, existing custody officers, team leaders, duty operations managers, administrative staff, education providers and healthcare practitioners
- All senior management/directors of the facilities
- All inmates (separate, secure training with different content and material tailored to the inmates)

Duration

This employee learning course is a one day workshop running from 09:00 – 17:30

The course structure over the day will be as follows:

09:00 - 09:30: Intro - What is this course for?

- Ice-breaker
- Explanation of why we are here

09:30 - 10:30: What is 'negative prison culture'?

Below are examples of how these hidden cultural behaviours can appear among both staff and inmates. All points will be individually addressed, explaining how these behaviours only thrive in a negative culture and how to reduce/prevent them by choosing to not be part of that culture.

Staff

- Misreporting / not reporting incidents
- Unnecessary incidents
- Staff unnecessarily using force
- Staff inappropriately using force
- Boasting and talking openly about use of force or unnecessary use of force
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour of staff towards inmates
- Staff consciously aware of CCTV camera 'blind spots' in the prison and using them to talk to inmates 'off camera'
- Staff talking to inmates privately for no reason
- Staff using racist/demeaning language towards inmates
- Staff bullying
- Staff physically and mentally abusing inmates
- Staff becoming corrupt
- Staff allowing contraband to be smuggled in
- Staff allowing inmates to fight
- Staff using illegal – not sanctioned use of force techniques
- Staff being aware that all the above activities occur and go on to 'turn a blind eye'

Inmates

- Inmates openly disrespecting staff
- Inmates openly physically and mentally abusing staff
- Inmates overpowering staff
- Inmates corrupting staff
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour of inmates towards staff

10:30 – 10:45: Tea/Coffee

10:45 - 11:30: Identification

- How cultures remain unidentified and grow, 'hiding from the inspectors'
- Video: Former chief inspector of prisons talks about the dangers of hidden cultures
- Logistics: How to hide, CCTV, movements, conversation, exclusion, forming negative club's

11:30 – 12:00: Negative culture case studies x 3

- Deaths in Custody
- Excessive use of force
- Corruption
- Open discussion about a culture that allowed this to happen

12:00 - 12:30: Turning a blind eye - just as guilty

- Showing that a negative culture can not only survive and thrive when practiced by the individuals who carry out the wrong-doing, It can also be contributed to by those who tell themselves they're not part of it but are willing to do nothing and simply let it go on by 'turning a blind eye'

12:30 - 13:00: Lunch

13:00 - 14:30: Film viewing: Panorama: Teenage Prison, Abuse Exposed

- Critical analysis of the negative culture at Medway Secure Training Centre in Rochester Kent
- Delegate exercise - break-out groups
- Q and A

14:30 – 15:00: Learnt behaviour cycle – Staff (Delivered with Psychologist contribution)

- Changing existing behaviours and practices
- Role models: New recruits vs. established staff

15:00 - 15:15: Tea/Coffee

15:15 – 15:45: Learnt behaviour cycle – Inmates (Delivered with Psychologist contribution)

- Inmates learning behaviours from staff, inmates learning from other inmates
- Changing existing behaviours and practices

15:45 - 16:15: Extreme environment

- Identifying the pressures and stresses of working in an extreme environment
- Don't crack, knowing when it's time to talk to someone. Good staff often break under the pressure and make the wrong decisions that lead to the negative culture cycle continuing.
- What is the motivation for working in secure care, justice and rehabilitation?

16:15 – 16:45: Snitching

You are NOT a snitch - openly discussing the reasons for not reporting

- How to address and report negative culture
- New whistle blowing platform including: tamper proof drop boxes for staff and inmates operated and accessed by our staff only.

16:45 – 17:30

- Recap and roundup of the day
- Individual role play assessment: making the right choices
- Hand outs
- Questionnaire

*** For YOIs and STCs, there will be an additional module as follows and this will be delivered by a top motivational educator:**

Education:

- How a negative culture can impact the education department:
 - Unmotivated teaching staff
 - Weak and unstructured lesson plans
 - Not taking specific /individual needs into account
 - Unprofessional teaching/education
- It's not just a pay check, you're an educator and mentor
- Making a real difference
- Going hands on - teacher vs custody officer, remember the difference
- Get motivated: relight the fire

How will success be measured?

- Lower incident rates (prison report before and at 3-month intervals thereafter)
- Lower use of force rates (prison report before and at 3-month intervals thereafter)
- Improved staff retention – staff turnover reduction (prison report before and 3-month intervals thereafter)
- Improved work environment for staff - Questionnaire
- Improved live environment for inmates – Questionnaire

- Net Promoter Score measurement mechanisms - The Net Promoter Score is an index ranging from -100 to 100 that measures the willingness of customers to recommend a company's products or services to others. It is used as a proxy for gauging the customer's overall satisfaction with a company's product or service and the customer's loyalty to the brand.