

# Managing Difficult Inmates



## Special Interest Group



Seirbhís Phríosúin  
na hÉireann  
Irish Prison Service



  
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# Who are we?



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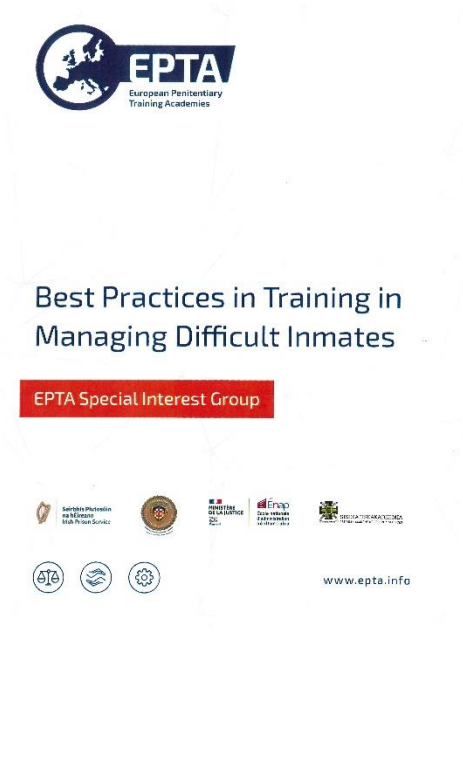
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# Function of the SIG



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# How?

- Two face-to-face meetings



- Numerous virtual meetings



- Plenty of discussion



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# Who are difficult inmates?

“Difficult inmates are a particular cohort of people who present serious problems to prison management, prison staff, other prisoners and themselves, through (repeated) violent behaviour. The focus is on those prisoners who display such high levels of violence that require them to be removed from general population, and placed in a more secure location and with higher staffing levels in an effort to address their violent and disruptive behaviour”



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## Best European Practices



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# Goal of the Best Practice document

- The goal of the handbook is to provide a how-to guide to training staff working with difficult inmates.
- This training can be provided for staff whether or not a service has specific specialist units to manage this group or not.
- Why do we think this will be helpful?
- Difficult inmates have quite specific management need, and rehabilitation needs and working with this population can be stressful and traumatic. Specialist knowledge is required to ensure effective rehabilitation and appropriate stress management skills are used.



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# Challenges of working with this prisoner cohort

## For the organisation...

- Increased number of staff injured through violent incidences.
- Decreased safety in the workplace leads to increased stress and burnout among staff.
- Both contribute to increased numbers of staff on sick leave and the amount of money spent on sick leave payments
- Increased resources required to manage the person safely e.g. numbers of officers during out of cell time, time taken up changing in and out of PPE if required.



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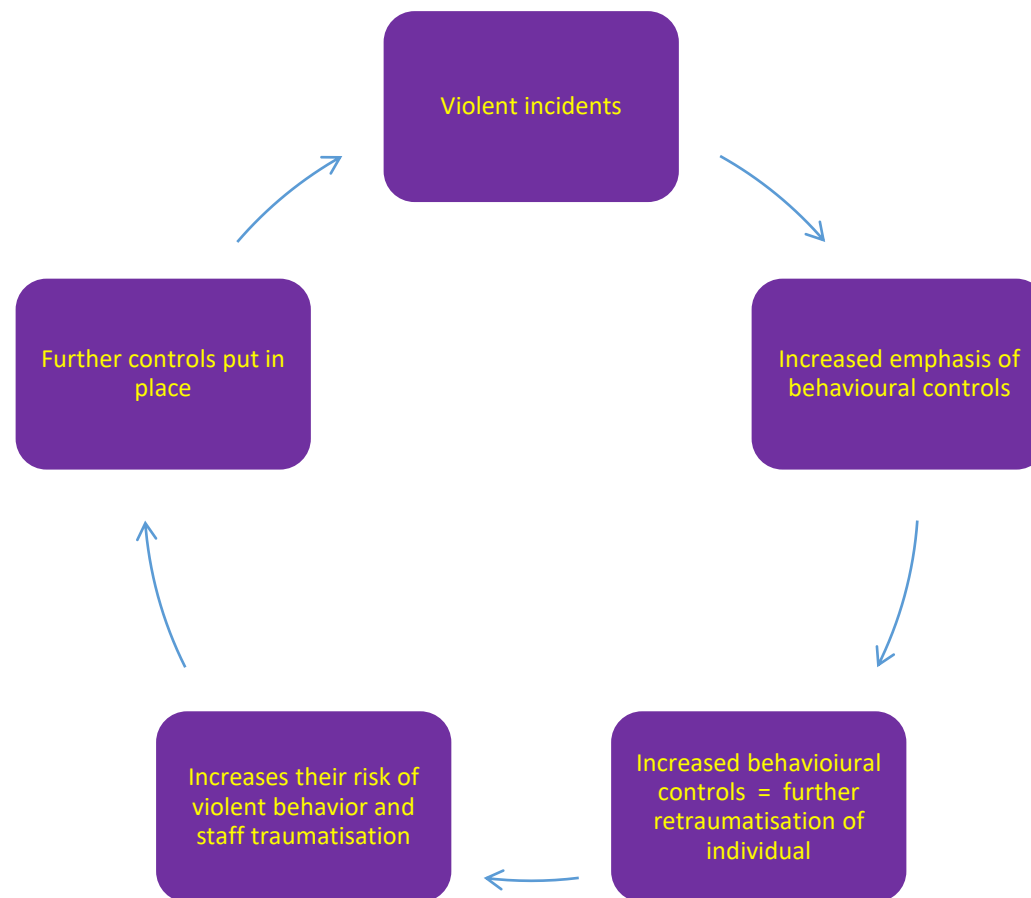
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# Challenges for the inmate



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# Why is specialist training useful in working with this group?

- Improved skills in dynamic risk assessment
- Improved skills in security procedures (relational, physical, procedural)
- Improved skills in effective communication
- Increased self awareness = improved stress management, lower levels of sick leave and costs for the organisation.



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# What did our countries have in common?

- Emphasis on various types of security
- Emphasis on an MDT approach
- Understanding why individuals become violent
- Building awareness of the impact on staff and supporting them through supervision, debriefing etc.



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# What can be established in all countries?

- Training should be developed and facilitated by a multi-disciplinary team
- Enhanced communication skills (understanding of body language, triggering statements)
- Training in the evolution of violent behaviour
- Addressing the impact of working with violence on staff



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# Brief overview of the Best Practice document training modules

- Staff selection
- Recommended timeframes for providing specialist training
- Training programmes used in both French and Irish Prison Services have been included for readers to use as guides to what could be included when developing own training.



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