Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (PIPEs)

PIPEs are specifically designed environments where staff members have additional training to develop an increased psychological understanding of their work. This understanding enables them to further create a safe and supportive environment that can facilitate the development of those who live there.

PIPEs are designed to have a particular focus on the environment in which they operate; actively recognising the importance and quality of relationships and interactions. They aim to maximise ordinary situations and to approach these in a psychologically informed way.

A ‘planned’ environment

In addition, these units have specifically planned components or activities which have the potential to maintain gains made in other interventions. The training for those working in PIPEs is built upon the Personality Disorder Knowledge and Understanding Framework (KUF) but also includes additional training on developing social environments and offending behaviour.

The Department of Health and NOMS are jointly supporting six pilot PIPE sites; two in Male Prisons (HMP Hull and HMP Gartree), two in Female Prisons (HMP Send and HMP Low Newton) and two Probation Approved Premises sites (Leicester and Merseyside).

The Prison units are designed to provide a progression option for those successfully completing offending behaviour programmes, primarily those of high intensity such as DSPD, Therapeutic Communities, HRP, CSCP, SOTP etc. In the women’s estate completion of less intensive structured interventions are also considered for referral. Probation Approved Premises will continue to manage their existing populations.

Following completion of a structured treatment intervention, or release on license to an Approved Premises, the PIPE offers the offender an opportunity to test and develop their
relationships and behavioural management strategies in preparation for the outside world and/or the next stage of their pathway.

The PIPE concept can be applied in many different settings, and be adapted for use prior to treatment; however for the purposes of the DH/NOMS pilot PIPE units, these will be focussing on progression through a pathway of intervention.

The model includes opportunities to **improve existing relationships** between offenders and staff, in part through the use of enhanced key worker or personal officer sessions. The PIPE model builds on existing structures and activities and provides opportunities for all formal and informal interactions, all positive and negative behaviours, to be considered by the staff group in a psychologically informed way. This in turn promotes the development of a healthy social environment and improves the quality of relationships and interactions, with the ultimate aim of reducing risk behaviours, improving psychological wellbeing and encouraging pro social living. Structured and semi-structured (creative) sessions are designed and delivered by the staff team on the PIPE and involve a range of individual and group activities. Each site has additional members of staff including a lead **Psychologist**. The unit Psychologist provides a clinical overview, leading on the implementation and maintenance of the PIPE culture.

One of the main areas of focus of the PIPE Progression Units will be the development of a positive and enabling environment. This is sometimes referred to as a healthy **Psychosocial Environment**. The PIPE therefore places an emphasis on how the environment operates so that it facilitates learning and growth rather than inadvertently reinforcing asocial or emotionally destructive behaviours.

PIPEs will form a significant part of a pathway of intervention for offenders with personality disorder, and it is proposed that these will eventually feature in all levels of security, both in custody and the community. People referred to the PIPEs however do not have to have a formal diagnosis of personality disorder.

**It is important to note that the PIPEs are not a treatment.** Instead they are designed to support and maintain developments achieved in other interventions and aim to enable offenders (some of whom who have personality disorder) to progress through a recognised pathway.

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