OASYS MANUAL – REVISED CHAPTER ON RISK OF SERIOUS HARM (CHAPTER 8)

PURPOSE

- To inform Chief Officers that Chapter 8 of the OASys Manual has been updated
- To inform them of the key changes
- To provide information on the dissemination of the revised Chapter 8.

ACTION

Chief Officers are asked to ensure that their staff use the new version of Chapter 8.

SUMMARY

Work has been underway since June 2005 - when the risk of harm improvement plan (PC 49/2005) was published - to revise Chapter 8 of the OASys Manual. The revised version is consistent with the NOMS Risk of Harm Guidance and Training Resource Pack produced by De Montfort University. The principal changes are set out in this Circular. The revised Chapter makes clear that all four harm levels (Low, Medium, High and Very High) deal with risk of serious harm. The revised Chapter 8 will shortly be made available on eOASys. Limited numbers have been printed and are being sent to areas.

RELEVANT PREVIOUS PROBATION CIRCULARS

PC10/2005

CONTACT FOR ENQUIRIES

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Key Changes to Chapter 8 of the OASys Manual

The principal changes are:

- **Risk of Serious Harm definitions**: Reference is now made only to ‘risk of serious harm’ and not to both ‘risk of harm’ and ‘risk of serious harm’.

- The definition for Low Risk of Serious Harm now reads: ‘Low – current evidence does not indicate likelihood of causing serious harm’. There is no such thing as NO RISK.

- The definition for Medium Risk of Serious Harm now begins: ‘Medium – there are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm’

- If the offender is in custody the assessment of risk of serious harm must be undertaken on the basis that release could be imminent.

- If the offender is in the community the assessment of risk of serious harm must consider the risk posed in the community but take into account any evidence that might indicate the offender could pose a risk of serious harm to anyone in prison.

- The need to ensure that countersigning is undertaken in all appropriate cases is reinforced. This is particularly important when staff seek exemption from completing the Full Risk of Serious Harm Analysis.

- Terrorism and Serious Organised Crime has been added to the list of key offence type indicators (R1.2).

- Detailed information is provided on the six headings to be used in the completion of the Risk Management Plan (R11.12). PC10/05 refers.

- The Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) has been added to the list of ‘Other Agencies Involved’ (R11.12).

Publication of the revised Chapter 8:

The revised Chapter 8 will be deployed in e-OASys shortly. Areas will be alerted to its deployment through Epic.

Chapter 8 has been printed in both English and Welsh and is being distributed to areas in the week beginning 9 October. However, since the revised version will be available on screen - and it is believed that this is the medium in which it is most likely to be used by staff - only a limited number of paper copies are being sent to each area. (Areas can, of course, make further copies if they wish to update all their hard copy manuals. Any manuals which remain in circulation without the amended chapter should have the earlier version removed and a note inserted directing the reader to the on-screen version).