
Overview

This standard is about providing support to individuals who receive bad news. It includes breaking the bad news and providing relevant information.

Bad news can include bereavement, divorce requests, sicknesses, legal news and accidents involving family members, friends and colleagues.

Individuals can include those in custody and staff working in custodial environments.

This standard does not cover supporting families of individuals in custody who die, please see SFJ GB13 Support families following a death in custody for this area.

There are three elements

- 1 Prepare to inform individuals of bad news
- 2 Break bad news to individuals
- 3 Provide ongoing support to individuals

**Performance
criteria**
Prepare to inform individuals of bad news**You must be able to:**

- P1 identify who needs to be notified of the bad news in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P2 check information regarding individuals in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P3 locate and record details regarding circumstances of bad news in accordance with your organisation's procedures, including:
 - P3.1 what happened
 - P3.2 who is involved
 - P3.3 checking the information and involvement other agencies have
- P4 liaise with people relevant to individuals to try to gauge how individuals may react in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P5 establish whether there is any history of disruptive behaviour which could be triggered by the bad news in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P6 identify if bad news is likely to attract media interest in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and:
 - P6.1 deal with this in line with agreed media strategies
- P7 arrange an interpreter where required to accompany you when announcing bad news in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P8 make arrangements to address any risks in informing individuals of bad news in accordance with your organisation's procedures

Break bad news to individuals**You must be able to:**

- P9 make contact with individuals after informing responsible member of staff in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P10 confirm that you are addressing the correct individuals in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P11 introduce yourself and any accompanying colleagues to individuals before announcing purpose of your visit in accordance with your organisation's procedures

Provide support when breaking bad news to individuals

- P12 disclose bad news, making sure that you deal with it directly in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and:
 - P12.1 use words that cannot be misinterpreted
- P13 provide factual account of what occurred in accordance with your organisational timescales
- P14 explain the support you can provide to individuals in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P15 ask whether individuals would like additional support in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and:
 - P15.1 contact these where requested
- P16 assess the risk of individuals becoming injured as a result of the bad news in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and:
 - P16.1 inform relevant people of potential risks
- P17 communicate in styles appropriate to individuals in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P18 check individuals have understood what they have been told in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P19 invite questions in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and:
 - P19.1 review need for further visit to check understanding
- P20 record key points that arise during discussions in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and:
 - P20.1 explain purpose of taking notes
- P21 facilitate contact with any family members in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P22 agree future contact arrangements where individuals request further meetings in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P23 provide details of support agencies in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P24 justify actions taken based on circumstances in accordance with your organisation's procedures

Provide ongoing support to individuals

- You must be able to:**
- P25 provide practical support to individuals within your levels of authority and expertise and in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P26 maintain contact with individuals where requested in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P27 review risks associated with individuals dealing with bad news in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and:
 - P27.1 take actions to deal with risks
 - P28 liaise with relevant people when required in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P29 facilitate attendance to other locations where appropriate in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P30 check information is shared only with those entitled to receive it in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P31 maintain complete records in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P32 end contact with individuals within organisational timescales and procedures, and:
 - P32.1 review requirement for future contact

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 actions to be taken by organisations following bad news
- K2 reporting requirements of organisations
- K3 the range of support offered within your organisation
- K4 the responsibilities of organisations in relation to working with others following bad news
- K5 procedures for informing individuals of bad news
- K6 lifestyle diversity issues that should be considered when working with individuals
- K7 strategies for addressing a range of reactions to bad news
- K8 typical dilemmas that may be faced by those involved in supporting individuals following bad news
- K9 strategies for dealing with dilemmas
- K10 issues to be addressed on first contact with individuals
- K11 how to inform relevant people when requests cannot be met
- K12 how to contact relevant people to understand individuals' potential reactions
- K13 the skills required of those supporting individuals who receive bad news
- K14 the information to gather about bad news and individuals
- K15 methods of assessing risks when informing individuals of bad news, including:
 - K15.1 the environment
 - K15.2 whether there is history of violence or self harm
 - K15.3 whether there is any media interest
- K16 procedures to follow where individuals are not available when you arrive to announce bad news
- K17 techniques for informing individuals with sensitivity
- K18 behaviours associated with receiving bad news
- K19 effect of individuals' behaviour on others when they receive bad news

Additional Information

Glossary

Relevant people can refer to individuals, others relevant or significant to individuals, staff in your own agency including investigating teams or staff from other agencies.

Organisational procedures can include prison service instructions, prison policies, legislative policies and any other policies and procedures used across custodial care in the UK.

Agencies can refer to GP's, Social Service (child protection), undertakers, hospitals

SFJFM1

Provide support when breaking bad news to individuals

Developed by	Skills for Justice
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Relevant occupations	Chaplains; prison staff; home office staff; community support groups; volunteers; healthcare officer; prison manager; governor; instructional officer
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Suite	Custodial Care
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