MANAGING SERIOUS VIOLENT OFFENDERS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PRISONS: CONTROL, CONSENSUS OR RESPONSIBILITY

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THIS PAPER WILL ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF OFFENDERS WHO are considered seriously violent and then suggest a framework within which such offenders can be managed. The argument is put that the existing management philosophies used in most Australian jurisdictions need modification, before individual interventions by specialist personnel such as psychiatrists have any chance of success certain conditions need to be met within prisons. While the correctional administrator must have an interest in the welfare and prospects for rehabilitation following release for the seriously violent offender, he or she must also take a high level of interest in what is happening within the prison community so that all prisoners have a chance to complete their sentences in a safe and reasonably decent environment.

Seriously Violent Offenders — How Many Are There?

Correctional administrators and criminologists usually have categorised prisoners as violent or non-violent on the basis of the major offence for which

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1 The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr Leigh Roeger, who read an early draft of this paper and together with Ms Vicki James provided the material on the Correctional Institutions Environment Scale.
they are being imprisoned. This is calculated by two methods and these give very
different answers. The first method looks at intakes to prison and this method was used
by Walker (1990). It found that fewer than one in six intakes to prison are violent
offenders.

The second method, and more useful from a management perspective, is to look at the
prisoner population on a census date. Using this method, on 30 June 1991 in South
Australia there were 420 offenders or 40 per cent of the prisoner population imprisoned for
committing a violent offence. Interestingly, another 191 had previously been imprisoned for
a violent offence. This means that a total of 611 prisoners of the 1,042 prisoners on this day
in South Australia have shown violent behaviour of such seriousness as to warrant a
sentence of imprisonment. For all correctional administrators, minimising further violent
behaviour is of paramount importance if a safe, secure and humane system of custody is to
be provided.

The Present Technique for Managing Seriously Violent Offenders

The standard technique used in most jurisdictions, and the basis of South Australia's
approach to this group, is to rely on Assessment and Classification as the basis for
implementing a system of control where the primary objective is to minimise the
opportunities for the seriously violent to cause trouble throughout the prison. The
seriously violent offenders are separated from the mainstream residential units and
other prisoners by the short-term strategy of placing such prisoners in so-called special
handling units. To facilitate the control of offenders placed in these units, the units are
usually purpose built and have specialised staff. Public scrutiny and debate about
special units such as Katingal in New South Wales, and former units like Jika Jika in
Victoria and S & D Division in South Australia has led to legislative constraints on
their use in Australian jurisdictions.

In part, the debate has been due to a lack of clarity about who should be placed in
such units and the reasons justifying their placement there. South Australia has
attempted to overcome this difficulty by modelling the criteria for admission to its
special handling unit—a twenty-four bed unit known as G Division located in the
state's most secure facility, Yatala Labour Prison—upon those used in the Federal
Correctional Service of Canada. In that jurisdiction prisoners are only held in special
handling units in particular circumstances which include:

- those involved in hostage taking, possible confinement or abduction incidents;
- those responsible for very serious assaults upon staff or other prisoners;
- escapees or attempted escapees who have resorted to violence in their escape
  attempts, for example, the use of firearms or motor vehicles as a means of
  force;
initially following conviction of murder of a law enforcement official, inmate or other person while under sentence;

• manufacture, possession, or introduction of firearms, ammunition, high explosive or any other weapon;

• incitement to conspiracy to kill or riot; and

• substantiated serious threats against the life of a staff member, inmate or other person (Coyle 1989).

If the objective is simply to isolate and neutralise the trouble makers then, from a managerial viewpoint, the strategy of placing them in special units must be regarded as reasonably effective. It allows the remainder of the prison population to be supervised and cared for in a far less harsh and intrusive regime. It also means that the staff have less reason to be constantly alert and fearful of personal assault although this threat can never be entirely eliminated. Fleisher (1989, p. 99) describes how:

Tension, anxiety, and anger build daily in social interactions between staffers and inmates: line staff are particularly vulnerable to explosions of inmates' stress, and inmates are vulnerable to line staffers' anxiety, tension and fears.

However, eventually the seriously violent offenders must be released from such special units.

A classification model would suggest that they then be transferred to another unit, less restrictive than the special unit, but not as free as a medium security regime might provide. This is the method used by the South Australian Department of Correctional Services (DCS) which is proposing to adopt a six-level classification system.

There will be two 'high' security ratings. 'High 1' will be applied to prisoners who would constitute an extreme danger to the public if they escape or pose a significant risk of causing injury to staff or other prisoners. Prisoners will only be classified as 'High 1', or removed from that classification with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer. Such prisoners will normally be accommodated in G Division and may be kept entirely separate or may be permitted to mix with other, carefully selected prisoners.

It is planned that this group be kept quite small. The longest period any one has so far been kept in G Division as the equivalent of High 1 has been a group of five prisoners involved in the taking of two officer hostages in B Division at Yatala Labour Prison on 25 June 1990. They have been there fifteen months, but the Department is currently planning to move this group individually back into mainstream regimes over the next three months. Subsequent to any period spent in G Division such prisoners may be placed in F Division which consists of a number of relatively small units where prisoners may have reasonable freedom but may not mix with the general prisoner population.
Violence in Prisons

The amount of violence occurring in prison is not easily measured. Another important measure of prison violence is assaults upon staff (see Appendix A). For example, as in the general community, many offences are not reported for various reasons. At the simplest level, correctional agencies record the number of assaults or serious crimes against the person such as rape or murder.

In his book Warehousing Violence, Fleisher (1989) describes a study he did on violence at Lompoc, a prison in the USA. Whilst his research shows it to be one of the better managed and therefore less violent of the Federal Bureau's prisons, he is still able to give plenty of examples of violence, even though he tends to discount the violence towards staff.

In several cases of inmate unarmed assault on line staff, staffers black eyes, bloody noses and contusions weren't 'injuries' by staffers definitions, but obvious (and proud) signs of 'not taking any . . . from convicts', said a line hack (Fleisher 1989, p. 199).

Two models which refer to prison violence suggest that:

- violence in prison is due to the concentration of violent offenders in the prison system; and
- violence in prison is due to the pathology of the prison environment, where there are particular opportunities and rewards for violent behaviour.

Another example of violence, this time from Yatala Labour Prison in Adelaide which seems to contain elements of both models occurred on 12 October 1989 in the B Division recreation yard when prisoner Anthony Wesley Stone received a single stab wound to the chest. Stone died a few minutes later on his way to Modbury Hospital while travelling in the ambulance. There were ninety prisoners in the yard, and at this time the police have not been able to charge anyone with his murder because of the 'wall of silence'—that is prisoners refusing to speak with them. Stone's death must be seen as an assassination. It is likely to have occurred because of feuding prisoner gangs. It happened because the necessary ingredients were present in the prison yard—anger, hate, distrust, and violent men gathered together.

In South Australia, the Department has recently begun some preliminary research on the prison environment using an instrument titled the Correctional Institutions Environment Scale (CEIS) (Moos 1968). The rationale underlying the CEIS is that behaviour is some interactive function of individual needs and the environmental 'press' which either satisfies or frustrates those needs. The instrument is similar to the Ward Atmosphere Scale which has been used to differentiate between the atmospheres in psychiatric wards.

Some interesting findings have arisen from our initial research at the Adelaide Remand Centre and are summarised in the following graph (see Figure 1). Firstly, prisoners perceive that their environment is very orientated
towards order, clarity of rules and control and that it is not supportive nor does it encourage their involvement in the prison regime or allow them to express their feelings. There is also considerable incongruence between how officers and prisoners view their shared environment. This reflects the existence of two very different subcultures. Communication and interaction in these circumstances is unlikely to be either meaningful or extensive. The important question for administrators is how to introduce changes which will enhance the way the correctional environment is perceived both by staff and prisoners (pers. comm., Ms Vicki James).

\textit{Figure 1}

\textbf{Adelaide Remand Centre}

\textbf{Mean Scores for Staff and Remandees}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1}
\caption{Adelaide Remand Centre Mean Scores for Staff and Remandees}
\end{figure}

\textbf{KEY:}
\begin{itemize}
\item invol = involvement
\item supp = supportive
\item express = express feelings
\item auto = autonomy
\item prac = practical orientation
\item prob = personal problem orientation
\item ord = order
\item clar = clarity of rules
\item cont = control
\end{itemize}
DiIulio's Models of Prison Management

Correctional administrators require analytical tools to assist them to better understand what has been occurring in prisons in recent years and to develop a philosophical framework for change. One possibility is provided in *Governing Prisons: A Comparative Study Of Correctional Management* (DiIulio 1987). This study contains four essential features—it focussed on the formal prison administration, it was comparative using the state systems of Texas, California and Michigan and considered only high security prisons and was explorative in nature (DiIulio 1987, pp. 3–4). DiIulio (1982, p. 6) argues that the key differences among the systems are rooted in differences of correctional philosophy and that 'the quality of prison life depends more on management practices than on any other single variable'.

On the basis of his study DiIulio suggests that there are three approaches to managing prisons which can be demonstrated. Those models are control, consensus and responsibility.

The Control Model

The main ingredients of the control model according to DiIulio (1987, pp. 105–7) are:

- paramilitary organisation;
- official rules and regulations are followed closely and enforced vigorously;
- controlled movement;
- rewards and punishments are swift and certain;
- every inmate does his own time; and
- management attempts to ensure that there are no gangs or associations.

The control model is based upon the premise that prisoners can only be effectively managed by a rigid regime where interaction by staff with prisoners is frowned upon. The regime, however is not necessarily inhumane. The uniform is a highly valued symbol of the authority of the state and controlled movement underpins the basic daily operations.

Under a control model staff tend to see prisoners as enemies, as morally reprobate and dangerous and they seek to have as little to do with prisoners as possible in order to maintain their own personal wholeness and integrity. Myrl Alexander (1969), when Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, wrote about the forces which work to maintain such attitudes in officers. Alexander described this as the 'circle of rejection':

This describes the natural 'reaction' of people who view irrational, irresponsible, and at times, unpredictable and threatening behaviour
with a mixture of fear, frustration and frank bewilderment... In our field we live with the reality that there is no love lost on offenders, especially adults... The fact of imprisonment is in reality a form of rejection or temporary banishment of offenders from community life in free society. This is keenly felt by correctional practitioners, by inmates themselves, and by the general public.

Correctional officers come from all walks of life and along with their talents and skills, bring attitudes and views, beliefs and prejudices from society. Often included in these values are rejective and racist views about offenders. While training and the formal prison culture may modify and control these, correctional officers are still members of the community. Conflict and ambivalence between official policy on the one hand and the informal culture in prisons and community attitudes to offenders on the other have been identified as sources of stress on staff.

Alexander's 'circle of rejection' is completed when officers claim they feel inferior or rejected by the general community and asked why they choose to work with 'crims'. Officers experience this when confronted off duty with views and opinions, often very forcefully put, by their friends and acquaintances which suggest that government policy towards offenders is weak and soft, that sentences are too short and that prisons are like motels or holiday camps.

In many instances of prison violence, particularly assaults on staff by prisoners these have occurred and are still occurring because the control model is no longer an effective form of prison administration and in an era of open and accountable prison management it is based on premises which are no longer acceptable to either staff or prisoners. Prisoners will not accept the excesses of a control model and the high risk of staff abuse of prisoners which has characterised the worst features of the control model.

The Consensus Model

The consensus model according to DiIulio (1987, p. 137ff) was the way Californian prisons were managed. It seems as though the consensus model represents a transition between a control model and the responsibility model which is operating in Michigan. In this model, prisoners are classified to the least restrictive environment subject to the maintenance of prison security and consistent with a commitment to public safety. They have access to a wide variety of programs. While the workforce is unionised there is a recognition that 'prison government rests ultimately on the consent of the governed' DiIulio (1987, p. 129).

DiIulio (1987, p. 137) suggests that the main defect of the consensus model is that there is 'no coherent pattern of correctional principles and practices'. It comes about when some staff begin to see that the prison operates effectively and safely through a more positive approach to management, for example, having a wide variety of privileges which can be given and then taken away for misdemeanours, when a differential approach is applied to the care and supervision of prisoners, there is less emphasis on managing in large groups. It includes giving prisoners honest, accurate and
timely information about events which affect them and their life within the prison community and which they have every right to know about.

It seems that jurisdictions drift into a consensus style of management and the outcome is a lack of coherent policies and philosophy. It is a style which may result from a concerted push by prisoners and their supporters for what are regarded as privileges. This may be augmented by pressure from external agencies such as the Ombudsman, lawyers and Members of Parliament who take up individual cases which expose faulty logic in correctional practices, and inconsistencies or unfairness or capriciousness in the way in which certain prisoners are dealt.

Although practices change as a result of these pressures, they change in an unplanned way not based on a consistent correctional philosophy. An example might be that censorship of a prisoner's outgoing mail continues until challenged by an external authority such as the Ombudsman, simply because that is the way things are done. The authorities however, know that when prisoners make telephone calls they are indeed uncensored and that they have no control over what the prisoner says or indeed who he phones. Another feature of the consensus model of management is that it can easily be affected by changes in political climate. Power can often seem to swing widely back and forth between the prison authorities and the prisoners. However, on balance it must be regarded as a more enlightened approach to management than the control model allows.

The Responsibility Model

DiIulio (1987, p. 118) states that 'the responsibility model placed a premium on measures that maximised inmates' responsibility for their own actions'. The features of the responsibility model are: an emphasis on inmate classification with the prisoner being placed in the least restrictive setting, extensive visiting and telephone calls, an emphasis on normalisation and unit management.

The model also has its defects: low officer morale and animosity towards head office which is seen as responsible for the hair brained schemes and not being in touch with the real, hard, cold world of prisons. Correctional officers in DiIulio's study did not have a clear sense of mission and the Department was highly bureaucratic. Officers complained that prisoners had too much property in their cells and that this gave rise to a caste system of the haves and have nots. Officers also complained of mountains of paper work.

However, these negative features did not mean that the responsibility model was inadequate. DiIulio (1987, p. 127) states:

Despite these defects, the quality of life inside Michigan prisons has been superior to the quality of life in many other State prisons.

The Australian Scene

In my view all Australian jurisdictions essentially operate on a control model but, in recent years, have taken the first faltering steps to implement consensus style administrations in all states and the Northern Territory and, in a few isolated instances, a responsibility model. The Special Care Unit in
the Long Bay complex in Sydney is a good example of the responsibility model in a high security setting.

**South Australia**

The South Australian Department of Correctional Services operated on a control model through the 1970s and into the early 1980s and many elements of the control model as described by DiIulio are still in place. Controlled movement is a feature of the regimes at the Adelaide Remand Centre and Yatala Labour Prison. The Department still employs uniformed staff who operate along strict hierarchical and paramilitary lines. Nevertheless, the Department is committed to the responsibility model within a framework of unit management and is in the midst of processes which will move it from control and consensus models to a responsibility model. This will take some considerable time to achieve. One strategy it pursued in 1989 was to send a Divisional Head, a Chief Correctional Officer and a Senior Correctional Officer, the latter two selected by competition and examination, to visit prisons in The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Finland with a view to studying the European approach—particularly Unit Management as it operates in Denmark. For good measure they were also able to visit prisons in the USSR, at Leningrad.

About twelve months later the Department had Mr Erik Anderson, the well known Danish prison manager and consultant spend time in South Australia conducting workshops for staff on how unit management operates in Denmark. In the time between the officers arriving back in South Australia and Mr Anderson's visit the three officers constituted a working group to begin the first steps in a process of getting staff familiar with the new proposed model for South Australia.

Some staff still hold views which are causing some problems for management as the Department grapples with issues such as award restructuring and how the job of correctional officers might be enriched as part of a transition to a consensus style of management. Staff have never been assisted to think in terms of a non-judgmental attitude towards prisoners, that you can work with an offender while not condoning the offence, that the human personality is a dynamic and evolving revelation of the person and that the criminal offence might have been a response to a situation that the officer may not have experienced and therefore cannot be certain as to how he or she might have faced such a personal challenge or situation.

The Department shares the view of Sykes (1958, pp. 63–83) who described the pains of imprisonment as deprivation of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy and of security. He suggested '[but] if the rigours of confinement cannot be completely removed, they can at least be mitigated by the patterns of social interaction among the inmates themselves'. His view was that deprivation of liberty constituted the essence of imprisonment. This was restated by Clarkson (1981, p. 77) in a Royal Commission report and he recommended it for adoption in South Australia.

The Clarkson Royal Commission was established in 1980 following allegations of mistreatment of prisoners at Adelaide Gaol and Yatala Labour
Prison. In retrospect, the control model was breaking down, the Department had grown too large to be managed as a benevolent autocracy and inadequate management information systems existed which were too slow and too inaccurate to assist the senior executive manage an increasingly restless and questioning prisoner population.

However, the recommendation was not acted upon immediately and officers received little guidance on how prisons should be managed and how prisoners should be cared for. Officers received just a few weeks' basic induction training and the Department was not well-resourced by the Government. Prisoners were cared for in a conservative and highly controlled environment and did not enjoy access to programs such as contact visits and access to telephone calls, to name just two examples of amenities which were becoming common in Victoria and New South Wales.

**The Responsibility Model In A Social Context**

Prisons must be seen as part of society and not as separate little worlds in themselves. That is why, for example, there is a drug problem in prisons. As modern prison management grapples with the effort to develop a coherent philosophy and, in particular, with what is humane containment of the seriously violent offender, it can be enlightening to set this challenge in the wider social context.

**Accountability**

Many public organisations are now much more accountable for what they do—through freedom of information, equal opportunity, and Ombudsmen and their own commitment to new values and the pursuit of excellence. Along with this goes;

**Responsibility**

Which is having reasons for one's actions, which need to be based on principles developed from a guiding philosophy.

**Violence**

We are seeing a considerable shift in community attitudes towards violence. Corporal punishment is banned in schools, child abuse is the focus of strong attention and domestic violence has a high profile. All these signal that aggressive interpersonal behaviour is to be moderated, a view shared at the highest levels of our community and one that led to the establishment of the National Committee on Violence (1990, p. xxi).

Prisons as part of society, must and will reflect these changes and correctional administrators and prison managements must see that they thoughtfully interpret and reflect them to their staff. This requires them to provide staff with enough time and the appropriate support and resources to manage the changes. Essentially it is about changing the face-to-face interaction between correctional officer and prisoner and dealing with the
issue of anger between them. It is about providing programs and structures which remove many of the pressures put on them by the control model of management. It is about developing a philosophical understanding that enables staff to have guiding principles that foster a non-judgmental attitude to the person in front of them. This will be based on seeing themselves there as not to add to the prisoner's punishment.

One area of research that has some promising potential to facilitate an understanding is that of loss and grief, for most of the prison population have experienced many deprivations throughout their lives and carry with them the contained anger, undealt with, that is part of the grief response to loss. Perhaps their most obvious loss is in their imprisonment which incorporates so many losses within it. It is little wonder that aspects of denial, depression and anger are manifest in the early part of the prisoner's sentence. Nor is it surprising that violence can easily erupt as it takes little to trigger off the undealt-with anger that so many prisoners carry with them.

So staff will need to have a high level of interpersonal communication skills, a manifestation of a very clear understanding of the guiding philosophy of correctional management. The design of buildings will also be important as well as the programs which are offered to the seriously violent offender.

**Programs for the Seriously Violent Offenders in South Australia**

**Work**

Every effort must be made to place the prisoner at constructive work. Work is seen as the core of management of such offenders. Challenging, creative work can improve self-esteem and give a sense of structure to the days and weeks, months and years of the prison sentence. Creative work enables longer-term goals to be aimed for and, if successfully achieved, can result in heightened feelings of self-worth and value. Unfortunately in South Australia the Department cannot provide full employment and in our smaller state, deeply affected by the recession, the opportunities to improve the number of work places seems limited.

**Recreation and leisure**

Long-serving prisoners, including the seriously violent offenders, are encouraged to participate in worthwhile and creative recreation and leisure activities. Individual and team sports are encouraged but, when the Mobilong Prison rugby team competed in the grand final of the local competition, it confounded the critics by being so successful and was subsequently expelled. It is essential that prison management be responsive and flexible not only to current trends and fads amongst the prisoner population but also to deal with such unexpected problems! The prisoners had to be encouraged to direct their energies elsewhere. Some long-term prisoners at Mobilong recently staged 'The Caine Mutiny', a welcome development as it is many years since drama was a feature of the South Australian prison system.
Education

The values of education for prisoners have been well documented elsewhere. At Yatala Labour Prison a sympathetic and creative art teacher has encouraged a succession of Aboriginal prisoners, some of whom are seriously violent, to free the wonderful artistic urges within themselves. The results have been renewed interest in their Aboriginal heritage and culture and an immediate boost to self-esteem through producing a desirable and saleable product.

Welch (1991, p. 146ff) argues that a formal Arts in Prison program operated by the Oklahoma Department Of Corrections has led to reduced costs for correctional staff and for vandalism. Arts programs, he states, are a time-management tool for prison administrations, and are a relatively low-cost way to introduce prisoners to a different set of values and positive role models. Finally he claims that there are reports of prisoners lives being dramatically changed as a result of commitment to prison art.

Health care

The Department of Correctional Services is fortunate in having good working relationships with the various providers of health care for prisoners. These include the Prison Medical Service, which is a unit of Modbury Hospital, and James Nash House, a special hospital for prisoners with serious psychiatric disorders. The Prisoner Assessment Committee, a unit of the Department of Correctional Services receives advice and assistance on placement and management of violent offenders with a psychiatric disorder from these service providers.

Department of Correctional Services Social Work Service

The Department has social workers placed in all its prisons. One-to-one programs which focus on anger management (with specific contracts between social worker and prisoner to work on behaviour) are used by social work staff. The Department is also presently negotiating with a not-for-profit agency to provide an anger management workshop at Northfield Prison Complex, a coordinate prison for men and women.

Sexual Offenders Treatment and Assessment Program

The Department works with the Sexual Offenders Treatment and Assessment Program (SOTAP), a unit of the Health Commission, which is run by a psychologist. Presently the program focuses on child sexual offenders. Prisoners in the last three months of sentence can be accepted for treatment by SOTAP at Northfield Prison Complex, with assessment usually occurring in the prior two months. Staff members in other prisons will receive training/briefing from SOTAP in the near future with an initial focus on social work staff from Port Lincoln and Mount Gambier prisons because these two institutions provide special placements to offenders who have been convicted of sexual crimes. Psychologists from SOTAP have also visited Port Lincoln Prison and Mount Gambier Gaol to assist selected prisoners. The
Senior Social Worker at Yatala Labour Prison also currently spends one day a week with the SOTAP program because the initial assessment of such prisoners is made at Yatala.

**The Way Forward**

In essence these programs are not vastly different from those available in most prison systems during the last decade with the exception of SOTAP. They may, however, be applied now with a more sophisticated understanding of their effects.

What is missing is an integrated approach coming from a coherent model of prison management so that the care of the seriously violent offenders is underpinned by the basic principles that dictate the patterns of care for all offenders.

Dilulio's responsibility model operating in a unit management framework appears to offer a way forward. Unit management in prisons is an approach which gives correctional officers more responsibility in a total way for the operation of a residential unit housing a discrete group of prisoners. The officers are required to take responsibility for all aspects of the prisoners' life including work, leisure, welfare and security. This will require a higher level of skill and therefore increased training.

The problem with 'the pursuit of excellence' is that better prisons can be seen as a solution by the community especially in times of escalating crime rates. Lest we are seduced by this idea let us remember that imprisonment remains essentially enigmatic in that people are deprived of their liberty and banished temporarily in order to prepare them to return to society. Imprisonment should be used as the punishment of last resort.

**References**


National Committee On Violence 1990, *Violence: Directions for Australia*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.


Appendix A

Assaults upon staff have shown an increasing trend over the years 1984 to 1987 but have begun to reduce since then except for a once off increase in 1989–90. The data has only been collated in the Department since 1982 with the establishment of the incident reporting system. One indicator of the severity of assault is the number of working days lost by the staff who are assaulted. The year by year data is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Staff Assaulted</th>
<th>Work Days Lost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983–84</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984–85</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985–86</td>
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<td>771</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989–90</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990–91</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the rates of assaults upon staff were lower in the years prior to 1983–84.