

NYC Department of Correction - Young Adult Plan Update 2016

An essential element of DOC's reform efforts has been to establish targeted strategies for safely housing and managing the needs of the various groups within DOC's care, such as adolescents, the mentally ill, young adults and the persistently violent. DOC's careful design of secure and appropriate housing and programs have enabled the Department to implement significant punitive segregation reforms, including: (1) ending punitive segregation for 16 and 17 year olds; and (2) placing significant limitations on the use of punitive segregation for inmates 18 and above (including limiting stays in punitive segregation to 30 continuous days and 60 days in a six-month period for all but a few exceptional cases). **As a result, DOC has been able to reduce the daily population of inmates in punitive segregation by 77% between March 31, 2014 and December 31, 2015 (from 611 to 142).**

DOC's reforms to date have already had an impact on 18-21 year olds ("Young Adults") in the Department's custody, including by **reducing the number of Young Adults in punitive segregation by 84% -- from 253 to 41 on December 31, 2015.** Through its Young Adult Plan, DOC is committed to further expanding its reform efforts to address the unique needs of Young Adult inmates (18 – 21 year olds), which comprise **approximately 12% of DOC's population but account for approximately one third of violent incidents.** Thus, DOC has been proceeding carefully with the development and implementation of the Young Adult Plan, particularly in light of recent challenges with inmate violence and assaults on staff. **In developing this plan and DOC has been focused on balancing safety and disciplinary concerns with brain research demonstrating that while Young Adults have a greater propensity for impulsivity and rash decision-making, they also have the capacity for behavioral change.**

DOC originally submitted its Young Adult Plan in Fall 2015 and requested an extension of the deadline for providing separate housing of Young Adults, as required by BOC rule, to December 31, 2015. As explained in DOC's December 15, 2015 letter to the BOC, in order to maximize the success of the Young Adult Plan and ensure safety for inmates and staff, DOC requests an additional extension to May 1, 2016 of the deadline to house Young Adults separate and apart from adult inmates (as required by BOC minimum standard §1-02(c)). In addition, because punitive segregation can only be safely eliminated after DOC has the necessary staffing, training, programming and housing alternatives in place, the Department also seeks an extension of time to completely eliminate punitive segregation until the core components of the Young Adult plan have been implemented and alternative housing units have been shown to be safe for managing the small number of seriously violent young adult inmates.

DOC is firmly committed to ending the use of punitive segregation for the young adult inmates in its custody. Below DOC outlines the steps it will take to implement the Young Adult Plan as

well as a proposed timeline for achieving DOC's and BOC's shared goal of safely managing this population through improved staffing, housing, disciplinary approaches and programming.

Updated Young Adult Plan

In order to separately house Young Adults and eliminate punitive segregation, DOC proposes to take the following steps to ensure its facilities, staff and programming are prepared to safely achieve these goals:

- 1. Complete Movement of a Majority of Young Adults into GMDC by May 1, 2016 (excluding exceptions and necessary subpopulations)**
 - a. Necessary Infrastructure Repairs Will Be Completed:** Installation of 100% camera coverage for all GMDC housing, the facility where DOC will house its Young Adult population (subject to the variances BOC has approved for co-mingled housing of sentenced young adults and other discreet populations). Complete cell door repairs for areas where high and medium-high inmates will be housed. Young Adult inmates, half of whom are already housed in GMDC, will be moved into housing areas as infrastructure repairs are completed.
 - b. Staff Training:** DOC is committed to ensuring that all staff assigned to steady posts with Young Adults are trained in Safe Crisis Management and those that will staff the alternative housing units for the more problematic and/or violent inmates will also receive additional training. Over the next month, the remaining 20 staff members who have steady posts with Young Adults will receive Safe Crisis Management training. In the next several weeks, staff that will be working in the alternative housing units (Second Chance, TRU and a new Secure Unit) will also begin receiving additional specialized training in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, both to better manage inmates, but also provide such programming and training directly to the inmates, in collaboration with program counselors.
 - c. Create New Admission Center Inside of GMDC:** In order to address BoC concerns about how 18 year old inmates are housed prior to admission to the Young Adult facility, GMDC, DOC will now separate high and low classification 18 year old inmates awaiting placement in appropriate GMDC housing. DOC is also working on establishing new admission housing, with separations by classification within GMDC directly. DOC is currently partnering with HHC to establish a joint new admission/intake clinic that will support the new admission housing inside of GMDC.
 - d. Expand Programming Targeting Young Adult Population:** DOC currently offers up programming in select housing areas for the young adult population in

GMDC, but has not completed the expansion of this programming. The GMDC Success Program, Horticultural Training, I-CAN skill-based workshops, and dedicated Program Counselors are currently in place for several housing units. These need to be expanded to more housing units, and, in addition, DOC is finalizing implementation of several other programming options, such as the Higher Learning Programs, Rikers Rovers, and I-CAN service programs.

2. Establish Progressively More Restrictive Alternative Housing Unit Pilots and Complete Elimination of Punitive Segregation for Young Adults (Complete Upon Stand Up and Assessment of Alternative Housing Models as Safe for Most Seriously Violent in June 2015):

- a. **Three Levels of Alternative Housing:** DOC will establish three levels of alternative housing for inmates that infract: (1) Transitional Restorative Units (TRU), (2) Second Chance Units (SCU), and (3) Secure Units. TRU and SCU have already been implemented with adolescents but require piloting with Young Adults. DOC will also pilot a new Secure Unit model, which will provide the highest level of secure housing for the most persistently and severely violent Young Adult inmates whom previously would have been placed in punitive segregation.
- b. **Specific Criteria, Notification, and Periodic Reviews:** DOC will adopt specific criteria relating to the seriousness and persistence of the violence in which a Young Adult inmate is involved to determine placement in these three units. Facility leadership, in collaboration with HHC, will be responsible for assessing whether inmates meet the criteria. The facility Warden or appropriate Deputy Warden will conduct a 60 day review of all inmates placed in a special designation unit (Second Chance, TRU, and Secure Unit), with the designated Assistant Chief or his/her designee performing a 90 day review of inmates placed in a special designation unit, and every 90 days thereafter. Through these reviews, DOC will determine whether inmates have accomplished the goals set forth in the individualized plans they will receive upon admission into these units and determine whether inmates can be securely stepped down to progressively less restrictive settings.

Based on the timeline for completion of the core elements outlined above, **DOC plans to meet the requirement that it separately house Young Adults by March 31, 2016.** With respect to ending punitive segregation, DOC will sequence implementation of the alternative housing units in order to safely draw down the number of Young Adults in punitive segregation from its current population of approximately 40. **Beginning in February 2016, DOC will start placing the least serious, non-violent infractors (whom previously would have been placed in**

punitive segregation) to Second Chance housing. DOC will then move to place Young Adult inmates who commit isolated acts of violence into TRU. Finally, **starting in March 2016, DOC will pilot the use of the Secure Unit for the most seriously and persistently violent inmates** that previously would have been placed in punitive segregation. During this time, DOC will maintain punitive segregation as an option for only the most violent Young Adult inmates while it tests the operations of the Secure Unit with a subset of this group and builds staff capacity to safely run this new alternative housing unit. DOC will take 60 days to assess whether the new model successfully contains Young Adult inmate violence at rates equivalent to or better than punitive segregation. **If the new Secure Units are stood up and are successful in containing violence for a 60 day period, it is anticipated that DOC will be able to eliminate punitive segregation for young adults in June 2016.**