



**The Professional Trades Union for Prison,  
Correctional & Secure Psychiatric Workers**

**National Chair:** Mark Fairhurst  
**General Secretary:** Steve Gillan

**Headquarters:**  
Cronin House  
245 Church St.  
Edmonton  
London N9 9HW

t. 020 8803 0255  
f. 020 8803 1761  
e. [general@poauk.org.uk](mailto:general@poauk.org.uk)  
w. [www.poauk.org.uk](http://www.poauk.org.uk)

**North Regional Office**  
1 Linden House  
Sardinia St.  
Leeds  
LS10 1BH

t. 01132 428833  
f. 01132 429075  
e. [adminnro@poauk.org.uk](mailto:adminnro@poauk.org.uk)

**Northern Ireland**  
Castell House  
116 Ballywalter Rd.  
Millisle Co Down  
BT22 2HS

t. 02891 861928  
f. 02891 861839  
e. [adminni@poauk.org.uk](mailto:adminni@poauk.org.uk)

**Scotland**  
21 Calder Rd.  
Edinburgh  
Scotland  
EH11 3 PF

t. 0131 443 8105  
f. 0131 444 0657  
e. [adminscot@poauk.org.uk](mailto:adminscot@poauk.org.uk)

**POA Circular 032/2019**

Action		Information	
England/Wales	<input type="checkbox"/>	England/Wales	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Scotland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scotland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Northern Ireland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Northern Ireland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Special Hospitals	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Hospitals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Private Sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Private Sector	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
IRC	<input type="checkbox"/>	IRC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

9th April 2019

Dear Colleagues

**PRISON SERVICE IN CRISIS**

Violence against our members and Prison staff are at record levels. The POA NEC will continue to make it a priority to reduce the violence in our workplaces in order to protect the membership and indeed those in our care.

I am particularly concerned by the lack of urgency from Government officials to deal with this issue. At every opportunity the Secretary of State Mr Gauke and Prison Minister Mr Stewart are appearing on National television and social media discussing Brexit and other legislation pertaining to divorce. Whilst those subject matters may well be very important there was not one mention from either on the disgraceful assaults on our members at Feltham over the weekend. I cannot think of a weekend in recent times where 20 members of staff were assaulted in one establishment which required 13 to receive hospital treatment for their injuries. The silence has also been deafening from Senior Leaders in the Prison Service with the exception of the usual Prison Service spokesperson stating, *"We will never tolerate violence against our staff and will push for the strongest possible punishment, which could lead to them spending more time behind bars"*. That statement is a standard statement that is used time and time again, but the fact remains the violence just gets worse.

Time and time again the POA keep stating to prison service officials and Ministers that the union is part of the solution not the problem. Instead of threatening the union with court action at every opportunity on health and safety issues Ministers ought to be engaging at every opportunity with the POA to agree solutions. I am afraid the Secretary of State Mr Gauke had a golden opportunity to condemn the attacks on Prison Staff this morning when being interviewed on SKY News but did not take the opportunity.

I cannot think of any other occupation where workers would be treated with such contempt. POA members do not go to work to be assaulted. The National Chairman Mark Fairhurst has done interviews for BBC News, ITV News, Radio stations and various national newspapers over the last 24 hours.

We will continue to put pressure on Ministers and Employers in relation to the violence against our members in the workplace and hold them responsible for the policies and lack of strategy to deal with the crisis that they have created. This isn't just an issue for POA members, but their families and relatives as well who are worried whether their loved ones are going to come home in one piece.

I commend our members not just at Feltham, but wherever they work in the country for service that they give every day of the week keeping the General Public safe.

The National Executive Committee meet on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and we will consider our next steps in relation to the hostility aimed at our members.

Thanking you in anticipation of your support and co-operation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Gillan', written in a cursive style.

STEVE GILLAN  
General Secretary