

BCJS Annual PREA Report: January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

Sexual abuse and sexual harassment of inmates by other inmates or by staff negatively impacts the mission of the Berks County Jail System (BCJS) to maintain a secure institutional environment that serves to provide protection and safety for the legally incarcerated of Berks County. In accordance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), the BCJS has established a zero-tolerance policy for substantiated acts or threats of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, or retaliation for the reporting of sexual abuse or harassment.

By providing training, education, and reviewing our policy and procedures on a yearly basis we are confident that we are providing the inmates, staff, contractors, and volunteers everything we can, so they are confident and comfortable with the PREA mandates. We are also confident that all of our staff, contractors, and volunteers have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the PREA mandates and the BCJS policies and procedures in order to effectively provide sexual abuse and harassment prevention, detection, and response to those allegations.

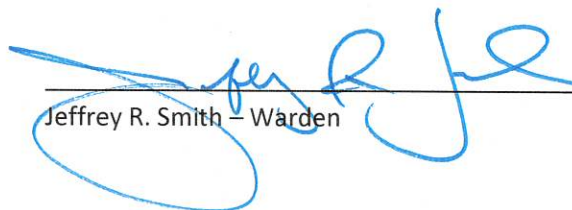
The Berks County Jail System had its first PREA Audit on June 27 and June 28, 2016. The final audit report noted 100% compliance with the PREA standards. The Jail had its second audit on March 13 and March 14, 2017. The final report for this audit also noted 100% compliance. The Berks County Jail had its most recent PREA audit on April 6, 2022, through April 8, 2022. The final audit report noted 100% compliance with the PREA standards.

Based upon a comparative analysis of PREA incidents in the year 2023. In the year 2023, there were a total of 4 PREA-related incidents, all of which were unfounded. In the year 2024, there were a total of 4 PREA-related incidents, one of the incidents being substantiated. In addition to these incidents, overall reporting increased in 2023 and 2024. The increase in allegations can be attributed to the return to normal operations from the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in higher population numbers from previous years.

With all reported incidents custody and supervisory staff responded to and intervened in each incident in accordance with policy. All incidents were reported to the PREA Coordinator in accordance with established procedure.

The Inmate Classification Committee, or ICC (which consists of treatment supervisor, a representative from the medical/mental health department, and a PREA Investigator), was not instructed to conduct reviews of the alleged victim in the one substantiated case as they were released from custody for unrelated reason soon after the conclusion of the reported incidents. The three other reports were not passed on to treatment due to being unsubstantiated and unfounded. Throughout the year, the ICC did conduct monthly interviews with all inmates who identified themselves as transgender.

The Berks County Jail System is scheduled to have its next PREA Audit on March 12th through March 14th, 2025 and remains committed to a zero-tolerance policy as described above.



Jeffrey R. Smith – Warden

06 MAR 2025
Date