

West Park Hospital
Edward Pease Way
Darlington
DL2 2TS

Our Ref: [REDACTED]

27 March 2017

Mr A Tweddle
H.M. Coroner, County Durham and Darlington
H.M. Coroners Office
PO Box 282
Bishop Auckland
County Durham
DL14 4FY

Dear Mr Tweddle

**Re: Margaret Atkinson, deceased
Regulation 28 Report**

As requested, please find detailed below our response to the recent Regulation 28 raised in relation to Margaret Atkinson (HMP).

Matter of Concern raised by HM Coroner:

The case revealed issues and difficulties about how situations were described and the choice of appropriate language with the corresponding difficulties responding therefrom in assessing risk. Furthermore, as there was unusual behaviour over an extended period of time there was an acceptance of such behaviour being normal and would not be considered as illustrative of increased risk unless there was a significant departure from that unusual (or bizarre behaviour as it was described in evidence). HMP Low Newton have issued interim guidance to endeavour to address the matter and G4S likewise. A copy of the G4S guidance is attached. This appears good. I believe this needs to be shared throughout the prisoner state generally and not just in the northeast cluster of prisons where G4S provides healthcare.

TEWV response:

Within the prison Mental Health services we have addressed the use of the term 'ligature' and staff are now describing what they observe more specifically. The requirement to do this has been discussed with all staff via discussion at team meetings. The Trust will work with partners to agree the guidance document which has been drafted. Following the

document being approved through agreed governance processes we will actively promote this as partners within the NE prison cluster for which we are responsible. The Regulation 28 notice was also served to G4S and HMP nationally who will respond to this accordingly.

I hope that the information contained here provides you with the necessary assurance you require.

Yours sincerely,



Colin Martin
Chief Executive