



HM Prison & Probation Service

Michael Spurr
Chief Executive
HM Prison & Probation Service
8th Floor 102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ
Email: ceohmpps@noms.gsi.gov.uk

Mr Christopher Sutton-Mattocks
Kent and Medway Coroner's Court
Cantium House,
County Hall,
Sandling Road,
Maidstone,
ME14 1XD

31 October 2018

Dear Mr Sutton-Mattocks

Thank you for your Regulation 28 Report of 9 April 2018 following the recent inquest into the death of Paul James at HMP Elmley on 20 December 2016.

I know that you will share a copy of this response with Mr James' family and I would like first to express my condolences for their loss. Every death in custody is a tragedy and the safety of those in our care is my absolute priority.

Your concern is the availability of razor blades to prisoners with a history of self-harm by using them, and you have suggested that further investigation and research is undertaken to develop protocols and procedures to deny prisoners access to razor blades in these circumstances.

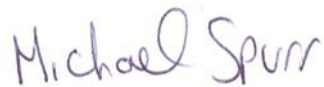
I understand that you were made aware during the inquest that as part of the requirement to have safe systems of work in place, there is an expectation that measures will be in place at each prison to assess and manage the risk posed by the availability of disposable razors as a means of self-harm. This was most recently re-enforced in a letter from Phil Cople, the Executive Director of Prisons, to Governors in April 2018.

In response to your concerns, we are taking a number of further actions. First, we will be issuing a learning bulletin within the next few weeks that draws on the example of this case to re-emphasise the risk presented by access to razor blades

and provides further guidance on how to manage them. Second, early in 2019 we will be piloting a revised version of the ACCT case management process for prisoners at risk of self-harm and suicide, and we will ensure that the revised documentation that is being introduced prompts case managers specifically to consider the risks associated with razor blades, and whether or not it is appropriate to take steps to restrict access, as part of each individual case review. Finally, the Prison Safety Team is giving further consideration to a broader range of options for managing this issue, including the practicality of further controls on access and the availability of safer alternatives to disposable razors.

Thank you again for bringing these matters of concern to my attention. I hope that this response provides reassurance that learning from this tragic incident is being shared widely across the prison estate.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Spurr". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael Spurr