



HM Prison & Probation Service

Director General Prisons
HM Prison and Probation Service
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102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

Mr James Bennett
HM Area Coroner for Birmingham and Solihull
Coroners Court
Steelhouse Lane
Birmingham
B4 6BJ

20 July 2022

Dear Mr Bennett,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report of 26 May 2022, addressed to the Secretary of State for Justice and the Chief Executive of Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust. I am responding on behalf of HMPPS as the Director General of Prisons.

I know that you will share a copy of this response with Mr Rahman's family, and I would first like 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.

You have expressed concerns around the calling of emergency codes, the recording of cell maintenance, and ligature risk assessments in cells. I will address these concerns in the order that they have been raised.

Given the often traumatic circumstances in which staff are expected to call a medical emergency code, it is recognised that this issue is one that must be continually reinforced to ensure it is fully embedded and staff are able to respond effectively. At a local level, HMP Birmingham have undertaken a range of initiatives to maintain staff awareness of the procedures, including 'pop-up' safety talks run by the prison's safety team which continue to be delivered during staff briefings, prominent signage that provides guidance, and the issuing of leaflets to all staff members.

Additionally, the Governor has reviewed HMP Birmingham's local medical emergency response code protocol to ensure that staff training is a central focus and that all staff have up to date training, including refresher training for all staff, which is currently in progress.

At a national level new emergency response guides were issued to all prisons which set out the actions required of staff in a medical emergency, including all the circumstances listed in the PSI 03/2013 Medical Emergency Response Codes under which a medical emergency response code should be called. In 2021, all Prisons were also issued with a supply of emergency response pocket cards which were shared with staff. The cards provided an instant reminder of how to respond to a medical emergency. In March 2022, a further supply of the emergency response pocket cards were issued to Regional Group Safety Leads for them to share with their prisons.

The findings of this inquest have also been shared with the national Safety team so that further consideration can be given to the points you have identified when national policy is next reviewed and revised.

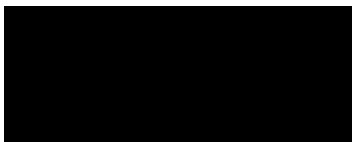
In relation to cell maintenance, a central record of cell fabric history has been implemented and all cell repairs and any changes to a cell being in or out of use is now recorded. The prison maintenance database, Planet FM, has also been updated and has the ability to print the full records for any cell and evidence that all required maintenance work is completed will be required before a cell is put a cell back into use. Cell maintenance is now also discussed weekly by the AMEY lead during the Governor's morning briefing to ensure that prison staff are aware of any maintenance work that is in progress or completed in order to share any updates.

Finally, you have queried the process for cell ligature risk assessments following evidence heard at the inquest. This process has since been reviewed internally and the introduction of a formalised process is currently underway with the Health and Safety team, in partnership with the NHS. The prison will be accountable for visiting the cell six months after the NHS assessment to confirm that any obvious ligature points are identified and minimised as best as possible.

On a national level, HMPPS is undertaking a review of ligature-resistant cells, which will include an assessment of the cell standards and regular maintenance to ensure that they do not deviate from the required standard over time.

Thank you again for bringing your concern to my attention. I trust that this response provides assurance that the appropriate action is being taken.

Yours sincerely,

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Director General of Prisons