

MISS MAIRIN CASEY
SENIOR CORONER
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire



The Council House
Old Market Square
Nottingham, NG1 2DT

28th September 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Prevention of Future Deaths Report

Thank you for your response to the Prevention of Future Deaths report that I issued following the inquest touching the death of Nigel John Saunders.

I am so pleased to read of the broad range of measures you have put in place to address my concerns.

I understand the improvements you have made to the Prison's investigation of deaths in custody processes are now being rolled out across the SERCO English prison estate. This will assist with learning from deaths in custody, with the overarching objective of seeking to reduce the number of preventable deaths that occur in prisons every year.

Two further matters occur to me on considering your helpful response.

Firstly, the Chief Coroner has, very recently, issued Coroners across England and Wales with new guidance in relation to Disclosure. At paragraph 4, the Chief Coroner suggests an undertaking be lodged by Interested Persons declaring that due diligence has been exercised in relation to the retention and disclosure of all relevant material. Consideration might be given to aligning your processes to include an undertaking similar to that suggested by the Chief Coroner. My practise in Nottingham has been to ask that the Prison Governor and the legal representative sign and lodge with the Coroner a copy of the undertaking at the end of the disclosure process. This additional step promotes a culture of openness, transparency and accountability, values which are so important to these very sensitive investigations. I include a link to the guidance, which is accessible to the public, here: [GUIDANCE No 44 DISCLOSURE final \(judiciary.uk\)](#)

Secondly, it does occur to me that the improvements you have overseen on behalf of SERCO, might actually assist the non-SERCO managed prisons estate in seeking to comply with their duties, and for that reason, I am going to copy my report and your response, along with this letter, to the Minister of State for Justice, Mr Rob Butler MP, purely for information purposes. A copy shall also be shared with the family, other Interested Persons and the Chief Coroner.

There has to be a commitment across all agencies to place bereaved families at the heart of the investigation process, and to seek to extract every opportunity for learning from these tragic deaths. I am grateful for the work you have undertaken in this regard.

Yours sincerely

Miss Laurinda Bower
HM Area Coroner
Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire