



At a national level, HMPPS is undertaking a review of ligature-resistant cells, which have been designed to eliminate ligature points as far as possible, including from the [REDACTED]. The review will include their build standards and how they are used to support prisoners in crisis. Our aim is to ensure that cells that are fitted with ligature-resistant features are available as an option for staff managing prisoners in crisis, and that they retain those features in full working order and do not deviate from the standard over time. At this point it is too early to say what new rules may be introduced, such as setting the frequency of maintenance, although we do recognise that cells are subject to constant wear and tear and need frequent attention to keep them up to standard.

I recognise the importance of ensuring that any evidence relating to deaths in custody is preserved, including the recollections of staff who have had recent interactions with the deceased individual. Prisons are required to have contingency plans in place that include debriefs with staff who were on the scene at the time of the incident, but these will not be the only staff to have had potentially relevant contact with the prisoner. We are currently drafting a new HMPPS Policy Framework, updating the policy for prisons to follow in the event of a death in custody, and within this will include guidance for prisons to ensure that staff who have relevant information are identified and prompted to make a record of this at an early stage. This will ensure that it is available at a later date, even if they are not required to give a police statement or interviewed by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) as part of their investigation.

Thank you again for bringing your concerns to my attention. I trust that this response provides assurance that action is being taken to address this matter.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Director General of Operations