



asked that consideration be given to providing alternative better quality mattresses and issuing national guidance on prisoners accessing additional mattresses.

I can confirm that a review of Prison Service Instruction (PSI 11/2015) *Fire Safety in Prison Establishments* was carried out in March 2022. The policy sets out the fire retardancy standards for furniture and upholstery in prisons which are assessed as being a very high hazard for fires. For reference, hospitals are classed as medium hazard and hotels and residential homes for the elderly as high hazard. For this reason there are very stringent regulations that HMPPS are required to comply with when considering the beds, mattresses, and bedding to provide to prisons to ensure the safety of prisoners and staff.

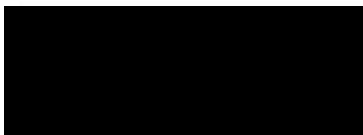
The mattresses issued by HMPPS are 100mm thick and are produced to a very specific standard with each batch scientifically tested to ensure that they meet the very rigorous fire retardancy standards. It is unfortunate that, in order to achieve safety standards, the mattresses can be quite hard, however the safety of those in our care must be paramount.

I can confirm that the metal bedframes at HMP Portland have been replaced by new whitewood furniture beds and am assured that the feedback received from the prison is that there has been a positive response to the new beds from prisoners.

In order to reduce the risk of mattresses being used as a barricade, prisons must manage this locally in the same way that they monitor the potential use of other cell furniture as a barricade, and staff must challenge prisoners who have additional mattresses and remove them. This is monitored through daily accommodation fabric checks which are recorded and assured locally to ensure safety and security.

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

Yours sincerely



Director General of Operations, HMPPS