



# HM Prison & Probation Service

**Director General of Operations**  
**HM Prison and Probation Service**  
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Mr Kevin McLoughlin  
Senior Coroner for the Coroner area of West Yorkshire (E)  
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9 February 2023

Dear Mr McLoughlin

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report of 2 December 2022, addressed to the Governor of HMP Wealstun and the Secretary of State for Justice, following the recent inquest into the death of Lewis Johnson at HMP Wealstun on 12 December 2019. I am responding as Director General of Operations for HMPPS.

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

Following evidence heard at the inquest, you have raised some concerns regarding the first aid training for staff particularly in relation to the use of CPR, and I will address these below.

It may be helpful for me to clarify the requirements currently in place for all establishments around the provision of first aid trained staff. Whilst there is currently no requirement for all prison staff to be trained in first aid, all prison officers receive emergency first-aid at work (EFAW) training, including how to administer CPR, during their entry level training, for use in their duties. Governors are required to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of trained staff on duty at all times. They do this by producing a detailed local first aid risk assessment to determine the number of first aid at work (FAW) and EFAW trained staff needed at the establishment, and by ensuring that they are deployed appropriately.

At HMP Wealstun the local risk assessment was last reviewed in October 2022. Consideration was given to the risk profile across all areas of the prison, paying particular attention to the night provision, due to there being no healthcare staff available during that time to provide emergency assistance should the need arise. Regular reviews will continue to be conducted to ensure that the needs of the prison continue to be met.

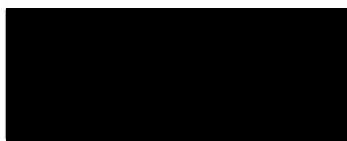
In respect of the EFAW training all prison officers receive during their entry level training, all first aid training certificates are valid for three years and although not mandatory, staff are encouraged to undertake refresher training to maintain their basic skills and keep up to date with any changes to first-aid procedures. The initial training for staff includes an HMPPS video which shows how to respond to an emergency situation where a prisoner has attempted suicide. This is currently being updated to reflect changes to policy and equipment available since the original video was produced. This video covers the use of prison issue ligature tools, emergency response codes, placing someone in the recovery position and considerations such as when to initiate first aid and the use of defibrillators. Once complete, the updated video will be made available to all training centres for new staff and for prisons. It is anticipated that this will be available to staff by Spring 2023.

While the delivery of staff training has been severely impacted as a result of restrictions put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with prisons only being able to deliver limited safety critical training, from April 2023 HMP Wealstun will be able to resume the delivery of FAW and EFAW training locally, and will prioritise all those on the dedicated night group, which includes Operation Support Grade staff. The intention is also for all Custodial Managers to receive this training, as well as a significant proportion of the wider officer group, to ensure that an effective emergency response can be provided when required.

Looking ahead, HMPPS is currently reviewing the first aid policy with the view to replacing this with updated guidance. As the new the guidance develops, collaboration will take place amongst teams to ensure there is reference to the commencement of CPR and to ensure we signpost the current safer custody guidance available on the HMPPS intranet which sets out the circumstances in which CPR should be commenced. This is designed to be read in conjunction with the current the Prison Service Instruction which makes clear that all staff must be aware of their responsibilities and of the local procedures that are in place to enable an effective response to medical emergencies.

Thank you again for bringing these matters of concern to my attention and I hope this provides you with the reassurances that you seek.

Yours Sincerely,



Director General of Operations