



HM Prison & Probation Service

Director General of Operations
HM Prison and Probation Service
8th Floor Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

Mr Crispin Butler
HM Senior Coroner for Buckinghamshire
29 Windsor End
Beaconsfield
HP9 2JJ

19 October 2023

Dear Mr Butler,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report of 15 August 2023, addressed to [REDACTED]. I am responding on behalf of His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) as Director General of Operations.

I know that you will share a copy of this response with Mr Nikolyan'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 regarding the recruitment and retention of prison officers at HMP Aylesbury.

To support Aylesbury's function as a category C trainer prison, a review of all staffing requirements was undertaken which has enabled Governors to review and distribute the resources available more effectively. The staffing position at HMP Aylesbury has notably improved and the now small number of vacancies for Band 3 Officers includes some staff who are currently undergoing training. A number of recruitment initiatives have taken place, with more planned for the coming months, to continue to fill vacancies in other key posts, such as instructors and probation POMs.

This increase in staffing has allowed an improved regime to be offered to all prisoners, and has enabled the expansion of the key work provision, which gives enhanced support to prisoners. HMP Aylesbury have appointed a Band 6 Neurodiversity support manager to raise awareness of neurodiversity among all staff, and to provide training using the neurodiversity toolkit. The reception and induction will also be adapted to make them more accessible for neurodivergent prisoners.

Considerable work continues to be undertaken to reduce the availability and use of drugs within HMP Aylesbury. A National and Group Drug Strategy support visit has included a review of the adjudication tariff and process for drug related incidents including positive MDT results, and a review of county lines and criminal exploitation. Conversations are additionally underway with Public Health and Commissioners to support the strategy of improving staff and prisoner

awareness around the impact of substance misuse, in order to restrict supply, reduce demand and build recovery.

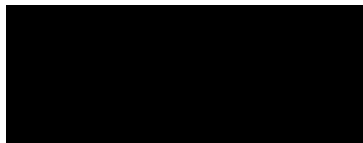
While levels of violence at the establishment remain low, the safety team has been reconfigured to offer more support to prisoners, adding an operational Band 5, Band 4 Analyst and an extra officer to this team.

At national level we are taking all necessary steps to improve the staffing position across the country, and we are seeing the impact of that work. Substantial levels of support has been provided to HMP Aylesbury as one of the highest priority prisons for recruitment marketing. In addition, the Prison Resourcing Communications team are working closely with the establishment to improve their staff engagement channels, including their staff newsletter, to increase staff pride and morale to help reduce attrition.

In September 2023, the Ministry of Justice launched its first ever large-scale TV and radio advert to support recruitment across England and Wales, aiming to attract new recruits to a career in HMPPS, while getting the public to rethink what working in the prison and probation service involves, all under the slogan “An extraordinary job done by someone like you”.

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,

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Director General of Operations