



HM Prison & Probation Service

Director General of Operations
HM Prison and Probation Service
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London
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Mr Philip Spinney
HM Senior Coroner
County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
EX2 4QD

10 November 2023

Dear Mr Spinney

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report of 19 September 2023 addressed to the Governor of HMP Exeter. 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 Stanley'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 raised some concerns regarding the management of the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) process and staffing levels, recruitment and retention at HMP Exeter. Thank you for bringing your concern to my attention.

HMP Exeter have reviewed the management of the ACCT process and have introduced an assurance procedure to ensure there is consistency and effective completion of all ACCT documents including observations. All ACCT are now allocated to a supervising officer who is responsible for conducting daily checks to ensure all set observations for the previous 24 hours have been completed. Any discrepancies are highlighted with the safety team for prompt action.

Since February 2023, the Prison Performance Support Programme (PPSP) have provided funding for 12 months for two Band 4 ACCT safety 'Floorwalkers' who are responsible for conducting regular upskilling sessions which include the need for accurate completion of observations. Further to this, ACCT V6 observation posters have been displayed in all wing offices and guides have been produced for staff.

With regards to your second concern, we remain committed to ensuring prisons are sufficiently resourced to deliver quality outcomes and ensure staff and prisoner safety, as well as improving our regime offering. Staffing has been an ongoing challenge at HMP Exeter, but from June 2020 to June 2023, the total number of operational staff increased by 12% (from 199 to 222), with Band 3-5 officers specifically increasing by 7% (from 165 to 176).

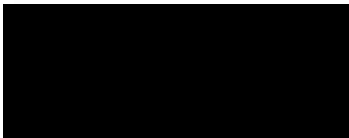
Nationally, we continue to monitor staffing levels across the estate, and when staffing levels affect stability or the regime, there are a number of ways establishments can maximise the use of their own resources and seek support from other establishments to address staffing shortfalls. HMP Exeter have previously received support with additional marketing activity to bolster the recruitment pipeline. Further to this, we have introduced a retention toolkit to help Governors identify the drivers of attrition in their prisons.

Following the Urgent Notification received by the prison in November 2022, additional action was taken to address concerns relating to leadership and staffing, this included a review of staff profiles and the core day regime. HMP Exeter remains classed as a 'standard plus' site, which reflects its complexity. A business case to uplift managerial grades has been approved to attract and retain experienced managers, and therefore improve stability of the leadership team for the Governor, Deputy Governor and Head of Safety grades.

More widely, there is ongoing work within HMPPS to examine the overall staffing model for Public sector prisons. The project aims to improve our analysis of resource allocation across the system and ensure that we have prioritized our staff resources to address key business.

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

Yours sincerely,

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Director General of Operations