



HM Prison & Probation Service

Director General of Operations
HM Prison and Probation Service
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Rachael Clare Griffin
Senior Coroner for the Area of Dorset
HM Coroner's Office
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3 April 2023

Dear Ms Griffin

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report of 5 December 2023, addressed to the Minister of State for Prisons, Parole and Probation, the Director General Chief Executive of HM Prison and Probation Service, and the Chief Executive of NHS England. 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 Jones'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 four matters of concern, regarding: the recording and use of information about significant dates for individuals that may impact on their safety; the management of individuals during such periods; accessibility of information on the National Offender Management Information System (NOMIS); and the lack of guidance about the issue of stockpiling in-possession medication.

I understand that NHS England will be providing a separate response on the matters that are of relevance to their work.

Turning first to your concerns about key dates, as you know, NOMIS allows information to be shared throughout the system both within an establishment and nationally. We recognise that NOMIS, is no longer fit for purpose, and are currently developing a new case management system, Digital Prison Services (DPS). Whilst neither NOMIS nor DPS is currently able to record key dates, this is something that we will revisit as we continue to develop DPS. Our main focus for now, is to build the core functionality that is needed in DPS in order to enable us to cease the use of NOMIS.

Our guidance on understanding risk and sharing information explains that significant dates for individuals, such as anniversaries, can be periods of increased risk and emphasises the

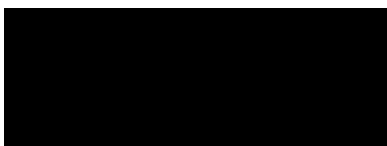
importance of recording information about such dates. We know that many prisons maintain local databases for this purpose. The importance of awareness that key dates may be triggers will also be made clear in the new Safety Policy Framework that we will shortly be issuing, which will be supported with guidance for staff about how to provide suitable, co-ordinated care during such trigger periods. In the meantime, we will issue a Senior Leaders Bulletin on the importance of recognising key dates and encouraging the use of local databases.

With regard to your third concern I have acknowledged above that NOMIS is not fit for purpose and explained that we are working on the development of DPS as a replacement. NOMIS does, however, provide the capacity for staff to search notes in various ways, including by type, subtype and date. The ability to search for key words is currently under consideration in the development of DPS, and we anticipate that this function will be available by 2025.

With regard to your final concern, decisions about which medication can be issued to be held in possession by prisoners are primarily a matter for healthcare providers, but prison staff have a role to play, and this is an area in which collaborative working and appropriate information sharing are crucial. There are a number of prison policies that cover the stockpiling of medication, or its retention after an individual has ceased a course of treatment. Depending on the circumstances, healthcare staff may consider further treatment or intervention or it could constitute possession of an unauthorised item, which would be an offence against prison discipline as set out in the Adjudications Policy Framework. In these circumstances prison staff are permitted to remove medication as an unauthorised item in accordance with the Searching Policy Framework, and the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework has recently been amended to require the removal of medication during cell clearances.

As always, we remain committed to prisoner safety as our key priority. Thank you again for bringing your concerns to my attention. I trust that this response provides assurance that action is being taken to address them.

Yours sincerely,

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Director General of Operations