



HM Prison & Probation Service

Director General Operations
HM Prison and Probation Service
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Ms Bronia Hartley
Assistant Coroner for Greater Manchester West
HM Coroner's Court and Office for Manchester West
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Howell Croft
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18 November 2024

Dear Ms Hartley

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report of 9 September 2024, addressed to the Ministry of Justice, following the inquest into the death of Ian Deavall on 24 January 2023 at HMP Forest Bank. 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 Deavall'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 that the emergency cell bells at HMP Forest Bank can be deactivated by other prisoners and that this presents a risk to vulnerable prisoners (VPs) when they are co-located with non-VPs on the induction wing.

The technical standard for cell call systems provides details about the cell call unit, the corridor reset unit and the wing office/custody control room display unit. You have raised concerns relating to the corridor reset unit. For new accommodation and new site-wide cell call systems in prisons, the preferred option of reset is by a proximity token mounted to a key fob that can be carried by staff. However, older existing systems have manual push buttons for reset.

HMP Forest Bank has a legacy cell call system that was installed at the time of construction and wings A-F have no wing office/custody control room display unit to identify the calling cells and the status of these calls. These units are in place on wings G and H and allow staff to identify cells that have had their call bells on even if they are turned off at the door. Plans for future investment with regards to the cell call system will be determined by the competitions process and award of future contracts.

HMP Forest Bank has advised that the induction is now split across two wings, which allows VPs and non-VPs to be housed separately, which means that the risks to VPs associated with co-location, including the cancelling of cell call bells by non-VPs, are no longer present.

More generally HMPPS is committed to protecting vulnerable prisoners from abuse and neglect and PSI16/2015 Adult Safeguarding in Prison describes the range of policies that are in place to achieve this.

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 Operations