

Ms Susan Ridge,
H.M. Assistant Coroner for Surrey

By email only to: [REDACTED]

10th June 2025

Dear Madam,

Inquest Touching the Death of Luke Harry Brockwell Barnes

I refer to your Regulation 28 Report following the Inquest into the death of Mr. Barnes and am issuing this response on behalf of His Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS).

I know that you will share a copy of this response with his family, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere condolences for their loss.

You raised the following concerns –

Probation staff are not always aware of or have access to relevant and/or specialist medical reports prepared for Liaison and Diversion Service and other bodies including mental health providers.

Concerns around the lack of universal access for NHS Liaison and Diversion (L&D) services to the Common Platform used by HM Court & Tribunal Service (HMCTS) has now been raised at Ministerial level. This has resulted in a review of the access arrangements and, as a result, HMCTS intends to remove the need for manual handling for the upload of L&D reports to the Common Platform and DCS as well as other evidence required from Criminal Justice System partners within the sentencing processes. This should remove the risk of Probation staff not always being aware of or having access to relevant reports with the Liaison and Diversion Service.

Whether there is sufficient training for all frontline probation service staff about neurodiverse conditions and their impact on post sentence supervision

All frontline Probation staff have access to training which covers

- Neurodiversity – Learning Disabilities and Challenges
- Neurodiversity - Brain Injury
- Neurodiversity - Autism and ADHD
- Diversity and Inclusion Learning and Development

This training is a requirement for all those training to become qualified Probation Officers and has been since 2021. HMPPS keeps the training it provides to all Probation frontline staff under review to ensure it is sufficient and current and meets the demands of the work being undertaken. It is part of the professional responsibility of Probation Practitioners to access relevant training to meet the diverse needs of those subject to Probation supervision and ensure that they can comply with the requirements of the Policy Framework for Sentence Management in the Community.

That a loophole exists whereby a sentence of the court, not actioned by probation service staff, (in this case a DRR) might not be referred back to the court for review.

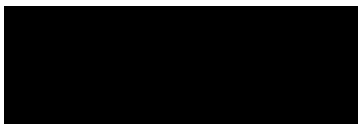
HMPPS has very recently (June 2025) updated its Drug Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR) Guidance (including DRR Reviews Guidance) to help create a standard approach across England and Wales.

The updated Guidance will ensure a consistent approach is used during DRR Reviews and following sentencing to a DRR and also simplify the process by providing clarity of roles and responsibilities and an improved DRR Review template. The aim of the updated Guidance is to improve efficiency; speed up referrals into drug treatment; increase the number of Order completions and increase judiciary confidence in the Orders.

The update Guidance documents are available to all Probation staff on a comprehensive computer database known as EQuIP (Excellence & Quality in Process) which provides easy access to operational processes and procedures.

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

Yours faithfully,

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Head of Operations