



# HM Prison & Probation Service

**Interim Director General of  
Operations**  
**HM Prison and Probation Service**  
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Ian Dreelan  
Assistant Coroner for Birmingham  
and Solihull  
50 Newton Street  
Birmingham  
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04 September 2025

Dear Mr Dreelan

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report of 10 July 2025 following the inquest into the death of Gavin Wheale at HMP Birmingham on 8 August 2024. I am responding on behalf of His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) as the Director General of Operations.

I know that you will share a copy of this response with Mr Wheale'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.

The first concern you raise relates to HMP Birmingham's Secreted Items Policy and its focus on preventing contraband from entering the prison system. I can confirm that following the inquest the prison has committed to updating the local policy to include clear guidance for staff on the action they need to take where it is suspected that a prisoner has ingested an item. The guidance will cover steps such as notifying healthcare, initiating appropriate observations, and considering whether suicide and self-harm procedures should be opened. Additionally, the West Midlands Group Safety Lead will ensure that consistent guidance is implemented across all establishments within their regional area.

You also raise a concern regarding the management of prisoners who enter the prison on high levels of monitoring. In response to this, HMP Birmingham will be issuing guidance to staff to ensure that a fully documented risk assessment is completed for any prisoner entering the establishment under constant supervision, whether due to secreted items or other reasons - to ensure that the individual is managed effectively and safely, clearly documenting the actions to be taken to manage any associated risks.

I hope the measures outlined above provide you with reassurance that learning and appropriate action is being taken to address the issues you have identified from the circumstances of Mr Wheale's death.

Yours sincerely

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Interim Director General Operations