



HM Prison & Probation Service

Director General of Operations
HM Prison and Probation Service
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London
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Patricia Harding
Senior Coroner for Kent and Medway
Oakwood House
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Maidstone
Kent
ME16 8AE

12 September 2025

Dear Ms Harding,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report of 25 July 2025 following the inquest into the death of Michael Pugh at HMP Swaleside on 29 June 2024. I am responding on behalf of His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) as the interim Director General of Operations.

I know that you will share a copy of this response with Mr Pugh's family, and I would firstly 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 concern regarding the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) training provided to new prison officers during their initial Prison Officer Entry Level Training (POELT).

I would like to assure you that HMPPS are committed to providing prison officers with the right support, training and tools to empower them to do their jobs.

All new members of staff receive a full day of training on suicide and self-harm prevention during their POELT training. This includes training on the ACCT process and the appropriate timings and intervals of when ACCT observations need to be carried out and recorded. Following completion of POELT training, new entry officers have a two week local induction before 'going live' and becoming fully operational. Part of this local induction programme at Swaleside includes ACCT upskilling and a session based on completion of ACCT documents and recording of ACCT observations. The local training team keep a record of these sessions. Any further training needs for staff would be identified and delivered locally.

Additionally, any member of staff who undertakes a key role relating to ACCT case management, for example ACCT assessors or case co-ordinators, receives training specific to these roles.

In addition to the training HMPPS has an online Safety Learning Reference Library which holds various guidance, templates and training material, all of which are accessible to all staff via the HMPPS intranet. The library includes an area dedicated to ACCT where staff can access a 'Recording Observations' video guide as well as a written guide, both of which

include examples of best practice for carrying out ACCT observations. Going forward HMP Swaleside will promote the Safety Learning Reference Library to new members of staff during their induction and, furthermore, will signpost the Safety Learning Reference Library to all staff during the HMPPS annual national safety focus initiative being held next month.

I hope the measures outlined above provide you with reassurance that learning and appropriate action has been taken following Mr Pugh's death.

Yours sincerely

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Director General Operations