



HM Prison & Probation Service

Director General of Operations
HM Prison and Probation Service
8th Floor Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

Bina Patel
Area Coroner for Bedfordshire and Luton
The Court House
Woburn Street
Amphill
Bedfordshire
MK45 2HX

06 May 2026

Dear Ms Patel,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report of 17 February 2026 following the inquest into the death of Mr Edward James Hands at HMP Bedford on 16 February 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 Hands' 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 regarding consistency between HMPPS staff and Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (NHFT) Under the Influence (UTI) policies and protocols.

Following the conclusion of the inquest HMP Bedford and NHFT carried out a joint review of the UTI policies and protocols in place. This review resulted in the removal of any previous conflicting guidance and implementation of a single UTI protocol with standardisation of responsibilities, including observation requirements, escalation routes, and handover expectations. This protocol has been agreed by both parties and is to be followed by both operational and healthcare staff at HMP Bedford.

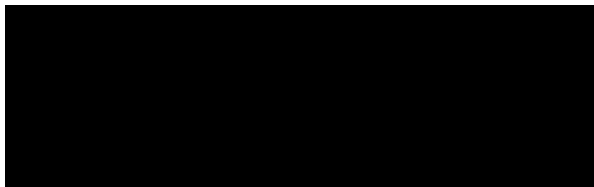
The updated protocol has been issued to all prison and healthcare staff through structured briefings, written notices, daily meeting updates, and daily checks.

Furthermore, the following additional actions have been carried out to reinforce the updated protocol:

- Staff have been given guidance on recognising signs of being UTI , initiating the protocol, completing observations, and ensuring follow up checks are undertaken.
- A newly appointed substance misuse lead carries out daily assurance and visits all suspected UTI cases, ensuring consistency between operational and healthcare colleagues and consistent adherence to the UTI protocol.
- Every UTI related incident is now logged and tracked to support monitoring and learning.
- Assurance of documentation and observations is completed to ensure compliance of timescales and escalation procedures. Where this identifies areas requiring improvement a record is made and the issue escalated to both prison and healthcare senior leaders to be addressed as appropriate.
- Learning is shared across teams and discussed in the monthly Healthcare Partnership Board, attended by senior leaders from both the prison and healthcare. This ensures that all parties have the opportunity to raise any issues and these can be addressed and monitored.

I hope the measures outlined above taken by HMP Bedford, in partnership with NHFT, provide you with reassurance that learning and appropriate action has been taken from the circumstances of Mr Hands' death.

Yours sincerely



Director General Operations