

HM Coroner Michael Pemberton
HM Coroner's Office for Manchester West
Paderborn House
Howell Croft North
Bolton
BL1 1QY

22 April 2026

Inquest touching on the death of Jake O'Brien

Dear Mr Pemberton,

I write on behalf of Sodexo Limited in my capacity as Sodexo's Director of Safer Custody for Sodexo's national prison estate. This letter is to provide formal assurance in relation to first aid training arrangements across Sodexo-operated prisons, which has been subject to recent review. I enclose a copy of the Sodexo *First Aid Training Matrix for Prisons* (*"the Training Matrix"*).

It is understood that, unlike some other Sodexo prisons, HMP Forest Bank had been operating on the basis that there were sufficient number of first aid trained staff who had completed the Initial Training Course, and therefore were accredited for the first three years. Whilst this does provide meet the legal minimum requirement for first aid trained staff, we have reviewed this approach taking into account high risk areas of the prison and the nature of the risks presented in a custodial setting.

You will see from the Training Matrix Sodexo's approach to first aid provision is governed by a structured, risk-based framework aligned to 'HMPPS National Health and Safety Arrangements for First and Emergency Aid Policy Framework' and 'HSE Guidance L74 (First Aid at Work)'. The Training Matrix defines minimum training requirements by role as well as renewal and refresher expectations. There are enhanced requirements for staff working in higher-risk operational settings (segregation and healthcare-dependent wings).

Following internal review, Sodexo confirms that:

- First aid training requirements are informed by establishment-level First Aid Needs Assessments.
- Where first aid qualifications have expired, staff are re-accredited as a priority. I understand that Forest Bank aim to have those reaccreditation as soon as practicable.
- In addition, Sodexo commits to annual refresher training, in order to maintain competence between formal recertification periods.
- Local leadership teams will embed these requirements within training plans and monitor compliance through routine assurance processes. Learning and Development teams will hold central records of completed training and use these to monitor annual refresher compliance and three-yearly recertification requirements.

Through this approach, Sodexo provides assurance that First Aid training arrangements are structured, risk-informed, and subject to ongoing governance, with the aim of ensuring staff are appropriately trained to respond to foreseeable medical emergencies within the custodial environment.

Yours sincerely



Director of Safer Custody

Sodexo Justice Services Limited