



Ministry of JUSTICE

National Offender
Management Service

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Mrs Louise Hunt
Senior Coroner
Birmingham and Solihull Area
50 Newton Street
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14 November 2014

Dear Mrs Hunt

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report dated 3 September 2014 addressed to Michael Spurr, Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), concerning the recent inquest into the death of Yohannes Kidane on the 19 December 2013 at HMP Birmingham. Your letter has been passed to the Equality, Rights and Decency Group in NOMS as we have policy responsibility for suicide prevention and self harm management and for sharing learning from deaths in custody. I have consulted with the Controller at HMP Birmingham in formulating this response.

You have raised three matters of concern. I am aware that the first of which concerns matters for Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust who will be responding separately. I will therefore address the second and third in turn.

Adequacy of Night Staffing for the conduct of ACCT observations

The night staffing level for HMP Birmingham was reviewed when responsibility for its operation was transferred to G4S, and NOMS is satisfied that it is acceptable. G4S has chosen to deploy a Prison Custody Officer (PCO) to patrol the healthcare centre at night, and this is beyond the public sector benchmark which would require the use of an Operational Support Grade (OSG) for this purpose. This allows extra flexibility, as a PCO is trained and authorised to perform additional duties, such as to unlock cell doors if required.

Each evening the PCO on night duty receives a handover from the PCO who has completed the day shift, and decides on the basis of the operational needs identified where best to locate themselves for that shift. At night the PCO and two nurses have access to both wards. In an emergency they use the alarm to summon assistance and the Night Orderly Officer and incident response PCOs from elsewhere in the prison respond and attend.

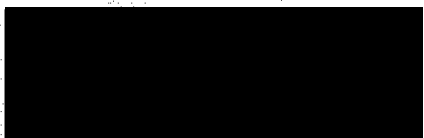
Staff breaks at night

The Night Orderly Officer arranges cover for breaks with the staff on duty at the beginning of each night shift. If there is a particularly high number of prisoners subject to Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) process in one location, the Night Orderly Officer may choose to locate an additional member of staff in that area. This is not common practice as night staffing levels are assessed as sufficient, but it is an option that can be used. If there

are prisoners located in the Healthcare Centre who are the subject of continuous supervision additional staff will be provided.

I hope this provides you with assurance that the matters of concern you have identified have been fully addressed.

Yours sincerely

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