



Ministry of JUSTICE

National Offender
Management Service

Senior Caseworker: Safer Custody
Casework
Equality, Rights & Decency Group
National Offender Management Service
4.15 Clive House
70 Petty France
London SW1H 9EX

Coroner ME Hassell
Senior Coroner for Inner North London
St Pancras Coroner's Court
Camley Street
London
N1C 4PP

15 August 2016

Dear Ms Hassell

Thank you for your Regulation 28 Reports to Prevent Future Deaths addressed to Michael Spurr, Chief Executive Officer at the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), and to [REDACTED] the Governor of HMP Pentonville, concerning the recent inquest into the death of Samuel Rodney Blair at HMP Pentonville on 2 August 2015. I am very grateful to you for agreeing an extension to the statutory deadline so that we could finalise our response to your reports. This response is sent on behalf of NOMS and HMP Pentonville, and has been formulated following consultation with the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust. I am aware that Care UK will reply separately concerning the matters of concern in your report that were addressed to them.

The report that you addressed to NOMS expresses concern that the staff who discovered Mr Blair had not received cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training. It correctly states that the NOMS position is that such training is not mandatory for all prison staff. However, it is not correct to characterise this as a 'resource-led' decision. NOMS is committed to ensuring that a sufficient number of suitably trained first aiders is always available in prisons to enable First Aid to be given to employees, prisoners and visitors. Prison Service Instruction 29/2015 First Aid, issued on 16 November 2015, requires every establishment to carry out a First Aid risk assessment to identify the number of trained first aiders required to provide cover throughout the day. Trained first aiders must hold an up to date, valid certificate of competence in either First Aid at Work (FAW) or Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW), and the number of staff trained is dependent on a number of factors which are considered during the risk assessment process. Colleagues at Pentonville have confirmed that their local risk assessment is up to date, and that, in accordance with it, there is a sufficient number of staff trained in first aid, including all night staff and all managers who undertake the role of Orderly Officer. As you know, the healthcare provider at Pentonville provides 24 hour cover, so the prison's own arrangements are supplemented by the presence of trained healthcare staff at all times.

The separate report addressed to the Governor raises concern about the fact that the prison's control room did not immediately provide the London Ambulance Service (LAS) with the gate location when they requested the attendance of an ambulance. I can confirm that since Mr Blair's death, colleagues at Pentonville have met the LAS to discuss this issue, and it has been agreed that the prison gate location will be

provided at the beginning of the call. Prison control room staff have been made aware of this requirement through verbal briefings.

This report also brings to the attention of the Governor the inadequate response of a nurse to the emergency call from the control room. As you point out in your report, the local protocol on action to be taken in response to emergency response codes is well publicised throughout the prison. The prison will continue to work with the healthcare provider to ensure that all staff are aware of the steps that they are required to take when responding to an emergency call.

I am grateful to you for raising these concerns with NOMS and the Governor, and I hope that this response provides assurance that appropriate action is being taken to prevent future deaths.

Yours sincerely

