



**HM Prison &
Probation Service**

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Rachael C Griffin
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Dear Ms Griffin,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 reports of 25 June following the conclusion of the inquest into the death of Andrew Craig at HMP Guys Marsh on 16 September 2016. I am responding on behalf of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). I would also like to apologise for the delay in responding to your concerns. This delay was in order for us to be able to provide you with a full and detailed response.

I know that you will share a copy of this response with Mr Craig's family and I would first like to express my sincere 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 about the use of drugs at Guys Marsh. As well as saying that there should be further consideration around restricting the supply of drugs you have suggested that thought be given to replacing or adapting cell windows at the prison. You have also asked that the policies and procedures relating

to the dispensing and monitoring of medication are reviewed. I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention.

In terms of your concern about the design of the cell windows at the prison, as you know, in January 2017 the Governor submitted an estate investment proposal to replace the cell windows throughout the prison. I am pleased to tell you that the plan to upgrade the windows has now been approved and is provisionally on the Ministry of Justice programme for delivery in 2019/20, subject to funding from the Strategic Asset Management Board. The new windows will be compliant with 'safer cell' standards and will be vented which will restrict the opportunity to pass items between cells.

With regard to wider drug strategies and procedures, the Governor and staff at Guys Marsh are committed to helping men to address their substance misuse issues and are determined to prevent the number of illicit substance misuse related deaths in custody. The prison has made a number of changes following the tragic death of Mr Craig and will continue to monitor actions in order to improve safety and reduce the supply and misuse of drugs in the prison. Staff are committed to working to reduce the use of illegal drugs and recognise that the trading and consumption of illegal substances can have a serious impact on the welfare of those who are in custody.

A new local substance misuse policy has been developed in line with the Government Drug Strategy. The policy emphasises the importance of information sharing to tackle the problems associated with drugs in custody and prioritises reducing the availability of drugs in the prison through the use of search dogs and mandatory drug testing. The prison also tries to monitor any distribution of drugs around the prison through patrols and the use of CCTV.

'Spice, an all prison approach' is an action plan designed to tackle the drug culture at the prison. As part of the plan, briefing sessions aimed at improving knowledge and understanding about substance misuse are available to all staff. To date, the sessions have covered psychoactive substances (PS), prescription medication and steroids and have been well attended by both operational and non-operational staff.

Staff from different areas in the prison including security, safer custody and healthcare attend weekly meetings which are held to discuss and review the action plan. The meetings provide an opportunity to discuss a wide range of relevant issues such as security intelligence and the dissemination of information about spice use.

The prison has also devised the Persistent Psychoactive Substances Intervention Plan (PPSIP) which works in a similar way to the ACCT document. This plan is used as a monitoring and reviewing tool for prisoners who persistently abuse PS. Effective information sharing is key and the care of men on a PPSIP document is through a multi-disciplinary approach, using the skills of different staff as appropriate. The initiative allows early intervention and preventative work to promote prisoners' wellbeing. It also helps them to take responsibility for themselves and to make informed, safer choices whilst in custody and out in the community.

At a national level, we have created the Prison Improvement Directorate within HMPPS HQ, in which is a new Drugs Taskforce set up to tackle the use of drugs in

prison, including psychoactive substances (PS). The Taskforce includes secondees from the Police and NHS England, and experienced senior operational managers from prisons, so that expert advice and support can be provided to prisons. In addition to directly supporting the operational line, in the coming months the Taskforce will publish a strategy for tackling drug misuse in prisons, alongside practical guidance and good practice for prisons to follow.

Speakers from the taskforce attended a symposium at Guy's Marsh in August alongside key partners from NHS England, Specialised Services AWP Mental Health NHS Trust and the Exeter Drugs Project. The event was attended by staff and also prisoners with PS issues, some of whom spoke of their experiences.

I know that Care UK is responding to your concerns about the dispensing and monitoring of medication from a healthcare perspective, but it may be helpful if I set out the steps which the prison has taken.

HMP Guys Marsh and Care UK are working together to make improvements to the way that medication is dispensed and have introduced a number of measures to reduce the opportunity for prisoners to access medication which has not been prescribed to them.

In future, managing the conduct of those queuing for medication, ensuring that there is no bullying and that no medication is concealed, will be the responsibility of one person, rather than a different officer every day. This will both provide consistency and improve security and information sharing between prison and healthcare.

The floor in front of the dispensary has been clearly marked so that prisoners know where to stand both for security purposes and to ensure that their own and other people's privacy is respected. CCTV is in place in the dispensary area and wing staff are provided with lists of those who should be attending healthcare for medication.

Having seen the response from Care UK I understand that healthcare staff will not be checking each person's mouth to ensure that they have swallowed their medication. However, prison staff will be present to deal with any issues and will support healthcare staff when they have reason to believe that a prisoner has not swallowed medication or is being otherwise non-compliant.

Finally, HMP Guys Marsh has implemented a practice of medication management by which certain drugs will not be in the possession of prisoners but will be dispensed by healthcare. This is to prevent the drugs being diverted from one prisoner to another. Individual secure medication boxes have been ordered and will be fitted in each cell by the end of the year to allow each prisoner to safely store their in-possession medication. It is hoped that this will help to reduce the opportunity to take and misuse prescription drugs from others.

Thank you once again for bringing these concerns to my attention. Please be assured that learning from the circumstances of Mr Craig's death will be shared more widely with colleagues across the prison estate.

Yours sincerely

Michael Spurr

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