



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Phil Copple
Director General Prisons
HM Prison & Probation Service
8th Floor 102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ
E-mail: directorgeneralprisons@justice.gov.uk

Mr Andrew A Haigh
Senior Coroner
The Coroner's Court,
No 1 Staffordshire Palace,
Stafford,
ST16 2LP
E-mail: sscor@staffordshire.gov.uk

17 January 2020

Dear Mr Haigh,

Inquest into the death of Imran Mahmood

Thank you for your Regulation 28 Report of 4 September 2019 addressed to Dr Jo Farrar, Chief Executive Officer of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), following the inquest into the death of Imran Mahmood at HMP Dovegate on 16 July 2018. As you know, the report did not reach us immediately, and I am grateful to you for agreeing an extension to the statutory deadline for the submission of this response.

I know that you will share a copy of this response with Mr Mahmood'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.

I am grateful to you for bringing to my attention your concerns about the risks posed by the e-cigarettes available across the prison estate, with regard both to drug use and to fires.

We are aware of these risks and continue to seek the safest options available. We are not in a position to fund the development and manufacture of these products, so we are limited to what is commercially available. We are also constrained by cost, as we are not permitted to subsidise sales to prisoners and must offer products that are affordable to them. However, we are currently considering alternative vape devices, including a new device that is not an e-cigarette and has no electronics, batteries, heat or vapour, instead using vapourless valve technology to deliver a low dose of nicotine. If and when we identify an alternative device that is suitable on security, safety and commercial grounds we will make it available across the estate.

It should be noted that whilst there is information indicating that fires have been started by e-cigarettes, both accidentally through misuse, and with intent, our evidence shows that the number of cell fires has significantly reduced since the prison estate has gone smoke free.

Thank you again for bringing this matter of concern to my attention. I trust that this response provides assurance that we are aware of the risks and taking action to mitigate them.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in white ink. The signature appears to be 'P. Copple'.

Phil Copple