



HM Prison & Probation Service

Phil Copple
Director General Prisons
HM Prison and Probation Service
8th Floor Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

Email: DirectorGeneralPrisons@justice.gov.uk

Mr Alan R Craze
HM Senior Coroner for East Sussex
East Sussex Coroner's Office
Unit 56, Innovation Centre
Highfield Drive
St Leonards-On-Sea
East Sussex TN38 9UH

24 October 2019

Dear Mr Craze

Thank you for your Regulation 28 Report of 16 August 2019 following the inquest into the death of Justin Peter Gallagher at HMP Lewes on 17 June 2016. I am responding on behalf of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS).

I know that you will share a copy of this response with Mr Gallagher's family, and I would like first to express my condolences for their loss. The safety of those in our care is my absolute priority, and every death in custody is a tragedy.

As you know, the commissioning of health care in English prisons is the responsibility of NHS England and NHS Improvement, (NHSE/I), and HMPPS ensures access to healthcare services within establishments and, where required, at external healthcare facilities. I understand that NHSE/I is providing a separate response, and I will address matters (2) and (5) in your report, as these are within the responsibility of HMPPS.

The Governor of HMP Lewes is committed to providing resources for external escorts to medical appointments. Currently, sufficient escorting staff are made available for three external hospital escorts each weekday, and appointments are prioritised by the healthcare team. In the event that there are inadequate resources because of other operational pressures and it is necessary to consider the cancellation of an external appointment, the Duty Governor contacts the healthcare team for advice on the potential medical impact. If this results in a decision to cancel an escort, the healthcare team cancels and rearranges the appointment. Where possible, emergency escorts are facilitated in addition to scheduled appointments, but where this is not possible healthcare staff are asked to consider the priority with which the scheduled appointments are required and one is postponed to a later date.

With regard to the sharing of information between the organisations involved in the management and care of prisoners, you will appreciate that it is not appropriate for prison staff to have access to clinical records on SystemOne. At HMP Lewes, there is a daily

meeting between prison and healthcare staff at which important information is shared. Each staff team then ensures that their respective databases are updated.

I understand that a new database is being created by NHSE/I which will supersede the current clinical system. The plan is for this to have some inter-operability with the NOMIS database used by prison staff, and this will enable better sharing of information between prison and healthcare staff.

Thank you again for bringing your concerns to my attention. I hope this provides reassurance that they are being addressed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Copple". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

PHIL COPPLE

Director General for Prisons