



HM Prison & Probation Service

Phil Cople
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 Andrew A Haigh
Senior Coroner for Staffordshire South
Coroner's Office
1 Staffordshire Place
Stafford
ST16 2LP

15 May 2020

Dear Mr Haigh,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 Report of 13 March 2020 addressed to Mr Michael Spurr following the inquest into the death of Robert Anthony Brown at HMP Dovegate on 25 December 2018. Mr Spurr is no longer in post, and I am responding as Director General of Prisons. I am grateful to you for granting an extension to the statutory deadline for my response.

I know that you will share a copy of this response with Mr Brown's family, and I would first like 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.

Your report expressed concern about information sharing between prison and healthcare staff, and you asked for a progress report on the plans to develop a new system that was described in evidence that you heard at the inquest.

As you know, the commissioning of healthcare in English prisons is the responsibility of NHS England and NHS Improvement, and they are leading on work with HMPPS to implement inter-operability between SystmOne and NOMIS, in order to enable better sharing of information between prison and healthcare staff. This is a big project and there are three phases of implementation. Approximately fifty percent of the planned development work on phase one, which is automating patient administration data sent from NOMIS to SystmOne, has been completed.

Unfortunately, further work on this initiative has been temporarily halted by Total Phoenix Partnership (TPP), the supplier responsible for SystmOne, who have been directed to focus on COVID-19 related work. This will cause a delay, currently estimated at 8 weeks, meaning delivery of the completed phase one work is now forecast for August 2020. The sharing of risk information between NOMIS and SystmOne will form part of phase three of the project implementation, and it is forecast to be completed in 2021. If you would like any further information or updates on the project, then I would suggest contacting NHS England and NHS Improvement, as they are the lead organisation for the implementation process.

While this IT project is underway, and forms an important part of the solution to the challenges presented by the information sharing in the prison environment, work is also being done at a local level to ensure that prison staff and NHS staff work together more effectively. At Dovegate, the Safer Custody Zone was formed in 2019 to provide an area in which prison staff, the Mental Health Team and the Integrated Substance Misuse Team are able to work together each day to ensure that key information is routinely shared. The introduction of the new system will further enhance this collaborative work and will enable information to be readily accessible to all staff.

Thank you again for bringing your concerns to my attention. I trust that this response provides assurance that local action is being taken to address the matter and that, whilst currently temporarily on hold because of immediate work related to the pandemic, progress is being made on the project to improve the sharing of risk information.

Yours sincerely,

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

PHIL COPPLE

Director General of Prisons