



# HM Prison & Probation Service

**Director General Prisons**  
**HM Prison and Probation Service**  
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Mr James Hargan  
Assistant Coroner for West Yorkshire (E)  
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West Yorkshire  
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13 August 2021

Dear Mr Hargan

Thank you for Regulation 28 report of 23 June 2021, addressed to the Governor of HMP Leeds, following the recent inquest into the death of Wayne Boughen at the prison on 17 November 2018. I am responding as Director General for Prisons.

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

During the inquest, evidence was given that at the time of Mr Boughen's death HMP Leeds did not have any certified safer cells which met the national published standard and that this position remained unchanged. You were concerned that although the prison has a small number of cells which have an increased level of safety, these still did not comply with the certified standard. You note that Mr Boughen was located in an ordinary cell when he died.

I fully appreciate your concerns and would like to reassure you that we are committed to ensuring that prisoners in our care, particularly those who are considered to be at a risk of suicide or self-harm, are located in the safest environment possible. We recognise that cell safety is an important part of managing prisoners at risk, and wherever possible new builds and major refurbishment projects are delivered to the published safer cell specification. However we also know that placing someone who has been identified as being at risk in a safer cell that is fully compliant with the standard does not fully eliminate that risk. We therefore believe that whilst safer cells can be of assistance, they are not sufficient on their own to protect prisoners.

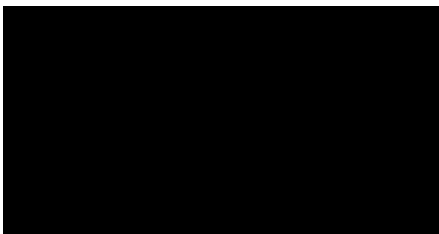
Many older establishments, including HMP Leeds, are built in a way that it makes it impossible to refurbish most cells in a way that fully meets every aspect of the safer cell specification. For this reason there is no requirement in our policy for prisons to have, or to use, safer cells. Nonetheless the Governor of HMP Leeds is committed to improving the safety of the available accommodation where possible, and will continue to work with Amey, the maintenance contractor, to identify opportunities for further work to reduce the availability of ligature points in cells.

We believe that the best way to protect prisoners at risk is through the individualised, multi-disciplinary case management provided by the Assessment, Care in Custody Teamwork (ACCT) process <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-prisoner-safety-in-custody-psi-642011>

Since the inquest a revised version of the ACCT has been fully introduced across the male estate, including at HMP Leeds. All staff at the prison have received awareness training specific to their roles and responsibilities and to highlight the key changes to the procedures. Some of the improvements made to the ACCT document are designed to lead to a better standard of record keeping and to ensure that key risk information is highlighted more clearly on a form that is updated throughout the process and encourages more meaningful interaction with prisoners at risk. An individualised assessment, considering risks, triggers and protective factors, is completed and used to produce an appropriate care plan setting out the support being offered to the individual concerned. This includes consideration of the prisoner's location, and the option to remove or restrict access to items that may be used as ligatures and/or the provision of alternative clothing. If risk is considered to be very high, levels of observation can be increased, and for those in acute crisis, constant supervision can be deployed. Implementation of the new version of ACCT at HMP Leeds is being monitored carefully by the Governor and safety team, with regular feedback to managers and individual staff highlighting any need for improvement and good practice where appropriate. I am confident that these measures will improve the operation of the ACCT process at HMP Leeds.

Thank you again for bringing these matters of concern to my attention. I hope this provides assurance that whilst the situation with regard to the availability of safer cells remains unchanged, the measures that have been taken to improve the ACCT system, and to ensure that the revised version is fully implemented at HMP Leeds, will ensure that prisoners identified as being at risk of self-harm and suicide are safely managed.

Yours sincerely



Director General for Prisons