



# HM Prison & Probation Service

**Director General Prisons**  
**HM Prison and Probation Service**  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor Ministry of Justice  
102 Petty France  
London SW1H 9AJ

Mr James E Thompson  
Assistant Coroner for County Durham & Darlington  
HM Coroners Office  
PO Box 282  
Bishop Auckland  
Co Durham  
DL14 4FY

15 November 2021

Dear Mr Thompson

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report of 21 September 2021, addressed to the Governor of HMP Durham, following the recent inquest into the death of Charlie Todd at the prison on 2 September 2019. I am responding as Director General of Prisons.

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

You express concern regarding the staffing and supervision arrangements within the Separation and Care Unit (SACU), and completion of the required hourly checks.

I can assure you that there is clear management oversight of the SACU. The day-to-day running of the unit is directed by a dedicated Custodial Manager (CM), responsible for the allocation of tasks and performance management of the officers working there. The CM reports to, and is supported by, the Head of Residence and Safety (a Governor grade) who forms part of the Governor's Senior Management Team. The running of the SACU is further subject to daily checks undertaken by the Orderly Officer and Duty Governor, and the Governor undertakes a weekly in-charge check.

I am confident that the staffing levels and supervisory arrangements in place are sufficient to deliver all of the SACU's regime, and allow for the required checks to take place. The staffing of the SACU is in line with national benchmarking standards, and indeed the Governor has provided an additional officer resource, as well as an administration staff member in order to support the work of the SACU. HMP Durham have a weekly Regime Management Plan meeting which forecasts staffing levels for the following week to ensure that the regime across the prison is delivered and consistent.

It is inevitable that at some points staff who are not normally based in the SACU will be required to work on the unit for a shift, and in order to support those staff in understanding the expectations of the unit a "Know Your Job" sheet will be provided to them, setting out the tasks they will be required to cover.

Additionally, the SACU CM has been tasked with overseeing the daily and weekly management checks being carried out and will also provide an update to the Head of Residence, so that any reoccurring issues can be promptly addressed as appropriate with individual staff.

A recently commissioned SACU pilot, considering operational processes within the SACU and the management of segregated prisoners, will provide the prison with an opportunity to improve paperwork and will also be used to look at the health support provided on the unit with feedback used to strengthen current practices.

Given the number of checks that take place throughout the prison on a daily basis, implementing a 'real-time' system to ensure these have been done would require significant and prohibitive resource. I believe that the robust assurance processes already in place, together with the improvements made will ensure that prisoners located in the SACU at HMP Durham, can be safely managed.

Thank you again for bringing these matters of concern to my attention and for your suggestions, and I hope this provides you with the reassurances that you seek.

Yours sincerely,



Director General for Prisons