



HM Prison &
Probation Service



Executive Director

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Official

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4 August 2023

Dear Jacqui,

I am writing in response to your letter received 31 July following my update in July on some of the current issues and developments in the children and young people secure estate.

I want to reassure you again of my commitment to improving safety across our sites. We know this is essential so we can enable staff to provide the safe, secure and decent care our children and young people need to achieve better outcomes. There is no single solution to this, and discussions or decisions on potential policy or operational changes are not taken in isolation. We are exploring a range of interventions and approaches to keep our children and staff safe.

A fundamental part of improving safety must be our ambition to deliver our Framework for Integrated Care, known as SECURE STAIRS, and to relentlessly focus on taking a trauma-informed approach to caring for children in secure settings. I know we share this ambition to continue to embed child-first principles and welcome your offer of support to share skills and experience with our frontline staff and managers.

Thank you for recognising the impact this work with NHS England has had so far, as well as other progress in areas such as our safeguarding policy, improved training for staff, some positive indicators in recently published safety in custody data, and our future estates vision.

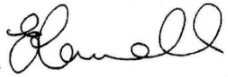
Equally, I take very seriously your comments in relation to ongoing discussions on the potential use of PAVA in the children and young people secure estate. I am particularly grateful for the feedback collated directly from your members. I can assure you this has been shared with my teams who are working on reviewing a range of evidence and preparing advice for operational leads and Ministers on this complex and serious issue.

I am clear that this is an extremely serious and challenging decision, to which we are taking a very careful and considered approach. The review of the use of PAVA in the youth estate was always intended to follow the evaluation of the roll out in the adult estate, in addition to a clear request from the Prison Officers Association who have representative rights for frontline operational staff in our YOIs. We are clear that we must consider the evidence to make an informed decision. In this, we must balance all the very complex considerations, many of which you have outlined, including children's distinct health and safeguarding needs and how any and all use of force is robustly governed to minimise inappropriate or disproportionate use.

Ministers will make the final decision and they will receive advice, including an Equality Impact Assessment, from officials by the end of the summer which will be carefully considered. We will update you and others as soon as possible.

As ever, I look forward to continuing to work with you in providing the safe, secure and decent care we know will help support our children and young people to better future outcomes. We continue to want to support access to community youth justice teams to support children whilst in our custody and work with us to improve their outcomes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Cornmell', written in a cursive style.

ED CORNMELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, YOUTH CUSTODY SERVICE