



# HM Prison & Probation Service

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Dear Justin

Thank you for sharing your annual report on Serious Further Offences (SFOs), which was published on 15 June and contained recommendations to HMPPS. I am writing to you in response to those recommendations.

As you acknowledged in the annual report, Public Protection Group (PPG) are currently reviewing aspects of the SFO Procedures, and your recommendations have prompted us to undertake a more fundamental review of the model by which SFO reviews are produced and of the resources required. The Probation Workforce Programme have completed a Workload Planning System activity review, which aside from examining the resource requirements of the existing model, also identified some possible process improvements. In parallel to the fundamental review, we are considering how we might implement those process improvements now.

You recommend that SFO reviews, particularly those of the most serious offences, be undertaken by a separate Probation Region and that we consider raising the grade of SFO reviewers, particularly for the most serious or complex cases. As you know, there is already provision in current SFO Procedures for us to allocate a reviewer at a more senior grade and to request another Region complete the report, and we currently use this provision in the most serious or complex cases. However, we will consider options for going further as part of comprehensive review of the SFO Procedures.

You also recommended we put robust processes in place to ensure that, following quality assurance feedback, all required changes to the SFO review document are made timely and to a sufficient standard. This is in effect a recommendation that we introduce repeat quality assurance for all reviews that require improvement, whereas our current approach is to target those reviews which will be shared with victims and to ensure the repeat quality assurance is done in time for the review to be shared with a victim. In the context of available resources, we consider this approach to be

proportionate and at this stage do not envisage making changes. However, as we are looking afresh at the SFO Procedures, we will also keep this under review.

The comprehensive review of the SFO procedures will also consider issues of format and countersigning. We agree that the format of the SFO review document needs reviewing, and that robust countersigning is a key element of the Procedures. Similarly, the review will inform improved action planning, ensuring that learning is translated into the most meaningful and impactful actions, feeds into organisational change and is shared with relevant partner agencies where applicable.

HMPPS will continue to work closely with your quality assurance inspectors and welcome having input into your review of the SFO standards, which we think will also support quality improvement.

Yours Sincerely,

**PHIL COPPLE**

Director General of Operations

Cc:

Amy Rees – Director General CEO, HMPPS.

Kim Thornden-Edwards – Chief Probation Officer

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