

THE MAN

In completing this brief report I have considered the documents provided to me by HMP Northallerton and the information, including the post mortem report, provided by HM Coroner.

Background

The man was born in 1987 in Sheffield. He was the eldest of three children. According to reports he had no meaningful relationship with his natural father.

The man's contact with Social Services began in 1991, initially following allegations of abuse against him. As time progressed referrals came from his mother who struggled to manage his challenging behaviour.

In January 2002, the man was accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. Sheffield Social Services placed him at Didsbury School, Manchester. It was during this period of his life that he came to the attention of the courts. His offences were largely as a result of frustration and inability to control his temper.

On 28 April 2003, the man received a twelve month Supervision Order. The man was unable to comply fully with this order and in December 2003 re-appeared before the courts. This time the man was given an Attendance Centre Order, but failed to complete it. In August 2004 he was given an Action Plan Order. He successfully completed this.

Over the next nine months the man appeared in various Youth Courts. Following an appearance on 12 April 2005, he was placed on a bed and breakfast basis in two separate establishments. These placements did not work and on 14 June 2005 he was remanded into custody. He was later released on bail, but committed further offences and found himself once more remanded in custody.

In December 2005, his case was adjourned to allow him to have a four week bail assessment period at an Approved Premises and to enable a Drug Rehabilitation Requirement assessment to take place.

The man was later breached and returned to prison after he failed to return to the hostel and when staff searched his room drug paraphernalia was found. The man was assessed as unsuitable to return to such accommodation and was to be advised to report to the council homeless section on release. The man was released on 11 May 2006.

13 June – 20 October 2006

The man was recalled to prison after unacceptable behaviour at the Probation Office, during which he was seen to have a 'gun'. This resulted in an armed response from the police and his subsequent arrest.

The man was initially received at HMP/YOI Doncaster, but within ten days had transferred to HMP Northallerton. HMP Northallerton takes young people aged 21 or under, serving two years or less, or in the last three months of their sentence. The regime is centred around preparation for release and job opportunities.

On reception at HMP/YOI Doncaster he went through all the usual reception assessment and screening processes. The man's self-harming behaviour was recorded, along with his drug use. The man's recall papers were prepared and served on him. His sentence was incorrectly calculated at this stage and he was given a sentence expiry date of 28 November 2006.

On 14 July, The man was seen by the mental health team, who could not find any treatable mental illness. They attributed his challenging and impulsive behaviour to 'learnt behaviour patterns'.

The man threatened self-harm on 6 August. A suicide and self-harm support document (F2052SH) was raised to support him through his crisis. The following day he transferred to HMP Hull for a court appearance. The F2052SH accompanied him, but was closed 48 hours later, after a case review.

A further sentence calculation was undertaken, and still gave the man an incorrect release date.

On 27 August, The man made minor cuts to his arms. The man was seen by healthcare and a Suicide and Self-harm support package (ACCT) was put in place. This was closed on 1 September, following a case review.

On 29 September, The man made superficial cuts and a support package was put in place. This was reviewed after 24 Hours and no longer felt necessary.

However, on 2 October, The man again self-harmed and so this once more triggered the care of at risk prisoner's process. The man was reviewed, assessed and involved in planning his care.

The man transferred back to Northallerton on 16 October, following a Parole Board hearing at which it was decided he should be released at this sentence expiry date. On 17 October, the Custody Administration Officer realised the mistakes in the sentence calculation. The man's sentence expiry date was in fact 20 October.

The man was seen by healthcare and probation the day before his release. He was noted to be fit for release and looking forward to going to his mothers.

The man was released on 20 October. His sentence has expired and he could therefore no longer be held in custody. Furthermore, as his licence had expired he was not subject to any supervision.

Conclusion

The man was treated sympathetically and sensitively whilst in custody with regard to his self-harming behaviour. The man was appropriately engaged in the review process and in planning his support.

It is of concern that the man's sentence calculation was repeatedly wrong and the mistake only discovered three days before he had to legally be released.

There is no documentary evidence to indicate what support the man was given prior to his release, but it is evidenced that he was seen by probation and healthcare.

I will share this brief summary of the man's care with the relevant establishments to support them in learning from significant events.

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