



Ministry  
of Justice



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

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The Right Honourable  
**Kit Malthouse MP**  
Minister of State for Crime,  
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**Victoria Atkins MP**  
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**Gillian Keegan MP**  
Minister of State for Care  
and Mental Health

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15 March 2022

Dear Juliet

### TACKLING ALCOHOL AND DRUG-RELATED DEATHS IN CUSTODY AND THE COMMUNITY

Thank you for your letter of 13<sup>th</sup> January and for sharing your report, *Protecting lives: a cross-system approach to addressing alcohol and drug-related deaths within the criminal justice system*, which we note with interest. We welcome the recent engagement we have had with you on matters relating to deaths in custody, and are fully committed to supporting offenders to overcome their substance misuse problems so that they can live drug-free lives, as well as preventing substance misuse deaths both in prison and following release.

The Ministry of Justice and the Department of Health and Social Care continue to work with cross-government partners to address the needs of this cohort. The Government's recently published 10-Year Drugs Strategy sets out details of our current and future work to tackle substance misuse, and the steps we are taking align with a number of recommendations in your report. For example, we are exploring the benefits of making long-acting buprenorphine available to prisoners, to assess the impact on engagement with treatment, protection from overdose and relapse after release. We are also supplying life-saving naloxone medication to staff in prisons and approved premises to prevent unnecessary deaths from opiate overdoses.

We remain committed across Government to work with you, as well as other criminal justice and health partners to progress these measures, and welcome your offer to discuss the report in more detail. Our offices will be in touch to schedule a suitable date and time.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to us.

**KIT MALTHOUSE MP**

**VICTORIA ATKINS MP**

**GILLIAN KEEGAN MP**