



Ministry of JUSTICE

National Offender
Management Service

Category A Team
High Security Prisons Group
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Mr A Hinchliffe
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Our ref: SE/S/68-09

19 June 2009

Dear Mr Hinchliffe,

Thank you for your letter of 15 June to Phil Wheatley regarding Mr Wilkinson. Your letter has been passed to the Category A Team as it concerns Mr Wilkinson's category A status.

While the Category A Team can not comment on risk assessments completed on other prisoners, it shares your view that all prisoners' risk assessments are completed as accurately, effectively, and also as humanly as possible. Your letter suggests this has not been done in Mr Wilkinson's case and that his continued imprisonment and category A status are the result of this.

The Category A Team believes this is with respect an idealistic and incorrect view. It notes that at each of Mr Wilkinson's security category reviews a range of reports have been completed, both by staff who may have direct contact with him and those looking at his risk from a more specialist point of view.

The Category A Team considers this is entirely necessary if a review is to objectively assess Mr Wilkinson's potential risk should he be unlawfully at large. It notes that at each review Mr Wilkinson has also had the opportunity to contribute significantly to his risk assessment by putting his side of the story in relation to, for example, his attitudes towards violence and his past criminal lifestyle. He has been able to do this through participation in interviews and programmes or through the submission of representations.

Your letter suggests that recommended psychological assessments and offending behaviour programmes have no provable value. You also suggest that an insistence on Mr Wilkinson's participation in programmes prevents those completing his reviews from seeing the genuine progress he has made in other areas.

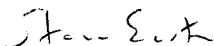
But all those involved in completing Mr Wilkinson's reviews can neither accept his own assessment of his potential risk at face value, nor rely on his compliance with the regime and achievements in education as convincing evidence that his potential for extreme violence has significantly changed. Their greater duty and consideration must always also be towards the safety of the general public, and not Mr Wilkinson's immediate progression or rehabilitation.

The Category A Team notes similar points relating to Mr Wilkinson's good behaviour and educational achievements were also made by the Parole Board in its recent further review of his suitability for release or open conditions.

The Category A Team considers that all aspects of Mr Wilkinson's progress in prison have been properly taken into account in his various reviews. But a necessary distinction has still been made between the evidence that shows good compliance and self-management within secure conditions, and the other evidence, admittedly difficult to define or to prove, that shows Mr Wilkinson has thought about his offending and developed skills to prevent him acting in the same way again.

~~The Category A Team considers that Mr Wilkinson's participation in psychological assessments or programmes provides a valid means for such evidence to be shown. It believes also that Mr Wilkinson's current refusal to take part in such intervention work will continue to suggest to those involved in his reviews that his only real goal is downgrading and release, and not a genuine change in the values and attitudes that led to his violent offending.~~

Yours faithfully,



Category A Team
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