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Parc Prison inmate who became delirious because of the drug spice hanged himself in shower room

An inmate who became delirious after smoking "a lot of spice" hanged himself in Bridgend's HMP Parc Prison. Jeffrey Griffiths, 35, was found hanged in a shower room in the prison on February 11, 2016, just weeks after being diagnosed with drug-induced delirium caused by use of new psychoactive substances (NPS) such as spice. Mr Griffiths, from the Ravenhill area of Swansea, was jailed for seven years in February, 2013, after being convicted of robbery. Having been remanded to HMP Swansea, Mr Griffiths - who had a history of substance misuse, depression and self-harm - was transferred to the Bridgend prison in August, 2015. In a report by the Prisons & Probation Ombudsman, published this week, Nigel Newcomen CBE wrote: "Mr Griffiths was subject to prison service suicide and self-harm prevention monitoring at the time of his death. "Unfortunately, we found weaknesses in the management of these arrangements – as we have in previous investigations at Parc, particularly that the prison did not properly identify or address all Mr Griffiths' known risk factors. "However, I do not consider that his behaviour was so concerning immediately prior to his death that the level of checking to which he was subject should have been higher." He added: "The investigation also identified Mr Griffiths' probable use of new psychoactive substances at Parc and their possible impact on his mental health. "I echo the concerns raised by HM Inspectorate of Prisons and the Independent Monitoring Board about the need for more effort to address both supply and demand for illicit drugs at the prison." In the report, it said Mr Griffiths tried to hang himself on December 31 and staff began ACCT procedures. ACCT is the prison service care-planning system used to support prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm. The purpose of ACCT is to try to determine the level of risk, how to reduce the risk and how best to monitor and supervise the prisoner. "Mr Griffiths said he was depressed about the custody issues concerning his children, felt paranoid and wanted to die," it said in the report. "He was referred for mental health support. Over the next four days, Mr Griffiths harmed himself twice and was moved to the Safer Custody Unit for closer monitoring. "On 5 January, a nurse referred Mr Griffiths to the mental health in-reach team for assessment. Mr Griffiths said he had smoked a lot of 'spice', a synthetic cannabinoid known as a new psychoactive substance, over Christmas." Mr Griffiths remained paranoid and anxious and seriously harmed himself again on January 8, it stated in the report, and on January 26, a prison doctor diagnosed Mr Griffiths with drug-induced delirium caused by NPS use. The doctor did not prescribe any medication and Mr Griffiths was not referred for substance misuse support. The report stated that Mr Griffiths saw his offender supervisor and a substance misuse offender supervisor in February 2016, when he told them he had been injecting amphetamines and mephedrone for 15 years and had been smoking spice for three years. He said that, since he had last smoked spice in December, 2015, he had become very paranoid and dreamt that he had done something bad to a family member. In the report, it said: "During 11 February, Mr Griffiths was quiet and a little withdrawn but staff were not particularly concerned about him. "At about 6.10pm, Mr Griffiths spoke to his sister said he could not cope anymore. "At around 6.25pm, Mr Griffiths went to the unit shower room and, at about 6.40pm, an officer found Mr Griffiths hanged. Staff and paramedics tried unsuccessfully to resuscitate Mr Griffiths and at 7.35pm, paramedics recorded that he had died." A preliminary post-mortem examination found that the cause of Mr Griffiths' death was pressure on the neck (hanging). A toxicology report found evidence of Mr Griffiths' prescribed medication, fluoxetine, but no evidence of any other drugs, including NPS. In the report, it stated that, at its recent inspection in January, 2016, HM Inspectorate of Prisons reported that illicit drugs were readily available at Parc Prison. It continued: "NPS are an increasing problem across the prison and immigration detention estates. They are difficult to detect, as they are not identified in current drug screening tests. "Many NPS contain synthetic cannabinoids, which can produce experiences similar to cannabis. NPS are usually made up of dried, shredded plant material with chemical additives and are smoked." NPS could affect the body in a number of ways including increasing heart rate, raising blood pressure, reducing blood supply to the heart and vomiting, the report added. Psychological effects can include psychosis and

hallucinations, depression and suicidal thoughts, antisocial or paranoid behaviour and emotional and erratic behaviour. As well as emerging evidence of dangers to both physical and mental health, there are other links to suicide or self-harm. The report concluded Mr Griffiths' mental health problems appeared to have been linked to his heavy use of NPS over the Christmas period. "However, we were concerned that he was not referred to substance misuse services until February 8," it added. "We are satisfied that Mr Griffiths received appropriate mental health care, although we were concerned that the referral to the mental health in-reach team was delayed." The report recommended that the director should ensure that staff managed prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm in line with national guidelines, in particular involving the prisoner's family when that would be beneficial and staff recording relevant information, among others. It added: "The director and head of healthcare should ensure that there is a clear pathway for mental health services, which ensures that prisoners identified as at risk of suicide and self-harm have an urgent mental health assessment within three days. "The director should ensure there is an effective substance misuse strategy to help reduce the availability and demand for new psychoactive substances, that staff are vigilant for signs of its use and are briefed about how to respond when prisoners appear to be under the influence of such substances." The report stated that Mr Griffiths' was the third apparently self-inflicted death at Parc since 2014, and there has been one since. It added that it had previously raised concerns about the management of the ACCT process. It continued: "The most recent inspection of Parc was in January, 2016. "Although inspectors noted there were a high number of incidents of self-harm, ACCT documents were completed to a good standard. "Inspectors found that mental health provision was inadequate." Last month, two inmates died at the prison. The two inmates were found unresponsive inside their prison cells on separate days in less than a week, but officials said their deaths were not connected. Inquests for both men have been listed for May 10 and a spokesman for the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman confirmed two investigations were under way. Earlier this month, a report found a prison officer who unlocked a cell didn't spot an inmate was dying. The men's prison houses around 1,600 convicted men and young adults, both convicted and on remand. It also has a unit for around 60 young people under 18. The facility is managed by G4s on behalf of the prison service, and is the only private prison in Wales. Director of HMP Parc, Janet Wallsgrove, said: "The loved ones of Mr Griffiths remain in our thoughts at this difficult time. "We have fully accepted the Prison and Probation Ombudsman's recommendations and a full review has been completed with our secondary provider of mental healthcare. "Staff are regularly reminded of their responsibility to record all interaction with prisoners on ACCTs, and further triggers around health and behavioural concerns are routinely reviewed and discussed as part the ACCT Case Review. "There is regular contact between prison managers carrying out these reviews and family, and prisoners are strong encouraged to maintain family ties. "We have developed a new psychoactive substance (NPS) strategy and action plan and our substance misuse strategy is reviewed annually and focuses on reducing the availability and demand of all substances, including NPS. "We also use our records of all NPS incidents to identify trends, providing further support to prisoners identified as using NPS and having a clear disciplinary and testing process."