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Prisoners Shouldn't Be Leaving in Body Bags: Fiancée Demands Accountability After Death at HMP Lowdham Grange

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– Categories: Human Rights



Kate Woodhead has issued a powerful call for reform following the death of her fiancé, Kane Boyce, at HMP Lowdham Grange in Nottinghamshire. “We don’t have a death sentence in this country,” she said. “People shouldn’t be coming out of jail in body bags.” Her statement reflects growing public concern over safety failures in the UK prison system, particularly at the troubled Category B facility.

Boyce, 41, was found dead in his cell in October 2021. An inquest concluded that while he had not intended to end his life, critical failures by prison staff contributed to his death. Despite showing signs of intoxication, proper checks were not carried out, and the electricity supply to his cell was cut without authorisation. The jury identified poor communication, neglect of protocol, and a troubling lack of accountability.

His death is one of many at HMP Lowdham Grange. Between August 2023 and March 2024 alone, ten inmates died in custody. An earlier inquest into three separate deaths in March 2023 revealed repeated institutional failings, prompting the coroner to issue a prevention of future deaths report and express serious concerns about the prison's operational culture.

Woodhead met Boyce while both were serving sentences and rekindled their relationship through prison correspondence. She described how conditions at the facility began deteriorating as early as 2018, with inadequate staff training, ignored warnings, and a pervasive sense of neglect contributing to a dangerous environment for inmates.

In February 2023, management of the prison was transferred from private contractor Serco to Sodexo, marking the first such handover between private providers in the UK. The Ministry of Justice, now overseeing operations, stated that measures have been introduced to improve inmate safety and staff conduct.

For Woodhead and the families of others who have died, these changes are only the beginning. "There needs to be a shift in culture, not just policy," she said. "Prisons must uphold their duty of care. No one should lose their life in a place that is meant to rehabilitate, not end a life."