

Addressing Decency Concerns in HM Prisons: A New Toilet Seat Design

Introduction

The absence of toilet seats and lids in prison cells has been a longstanding concern, with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) repeatedly highlighting this as a serious decency issue. Many prisoners are forced to use toilets without seats, which compromises hygiene, dignity, and overall living conditions – especially given most prisoners have to eat in their cells too. The current approach to fitting toilet seats is costly and inefficient, and estates contractors GFSL and Amey cannot keep up with demand – despite charging nearly £3M million per year for supplying and fitting toilet seats.

My new design removes the need for estates intervention as it allows prisoners to fit seats themselves using vacuum sucker cups, significantly reducing costs and addressing decency concerns. Critically, the new design will save HMPPS a colossal **£Millions per year**.

Issue

HMIP reports have consistently criticised the lack of toilet seats in cells, emphasising the negative impact on prisoner welfare. A recent inspection of HMP Stocken noted that many cells lacked toilet seats, contributing to poor sanitation and discomfort. Additionally, reports on immigration detention facilities have highlighted similar concerns, with toilets often missing seats and lids, further exacerbating hygiene issues.

The Innovative Design

The proposed **vacuum sucker cup toilet seat** offers several advantages:

1. **Self-Installation** – Prisoners can attach the seat themselves, eliminating the need, cost and critically the long wait for contractors to fit traditional seats.
2. **Ligature Risk Reduction** – The sucker cups **fail under excessive force**, preventing the seat from being used to attach ligatures – as is the existing risk with the current bolt on seats.
3. **Cost Efficiency** – With a much reduced **manufacturing over purchasing cost** the annual expenditure saves **£Millions** per year.

Financial and Safety Benefits

The new design not only reduces costs but also enhances safety. Traditional toilet seats can be misused for self-harm, whereas the vacuum sucker cup mechanism ensures that excessive force results in detachment, mitigating ligature risks. Furthermore, the significant cost savings could be redirected.

Conclusion

The introduction of my new design of toilet seat presents a practical, cost-effective, and humane solution to a longstanding issue in our prisons. By improving prisoner dignity, and reducing financial burdens, this innovation represents a really positive step forward.

Jason Swettenham

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