

October 2, 2018

Dear Mr. Heist:

This letter is to inform you that I met the Grievance Coordinator, Ms. Nadine Forgey and her supervisor, Ms. Robin Spindler, to discuss the grievance process and ways to improve the efficiency in response time to include making sure the responses are of substance and professional. A majority of my interest in the grievance process is the application of procedure as many of the grievances are significantly delayed, misplaced, or they are not considered a priority in regard to effective communication between the population and staff. Frivolous responses are defeating and only add to the negative demeanor of the complainant. Ms. Forgey and Ms. Spindler acknowledged that the grievances process is riding on a thin rail in terms of compliance and appropriate redress.

Our meeting was productive with the hope that within the next few months the grievance system will be managed electronically which will eliminate the troubled areas. An electronic system will also provide an accurate timeline of responses and/or delay. In addition, training will be provided before the end of this year to 150 staff responsible for processing grievances. I will continue to monitor the reformation of the grievance process and have asked to be included in discussions in the upcoming weeks.

The Inspector General and Deputy Ombudsman are continuing to work with NDCS Administrators on "collective punishment." I agree that punishing the masses for actions of a few is counterproductive toward rehabilitation. Regarding your complaint on removal of the microwave, I will not address this matter with staff as they have full discretion on any matter they may be deemed safety related. As you know, microwaves are considered a privilege within the confines of a prison, but can also be used for deviant acts.

Thank you for bringing these matters to our attention. We are working diligently and strategically to bring about change. I will close your case; however, if you have concerns regarding other matters, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Anthony Kay
Assistant Ombudsman