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**PRIORY**

██████████  
Director of Safety  
Priory Group  
Fifth floor  
80 Hammersmith Road  
London, W14 8UD  
Tel. 020 7605 0923

Email: ██████████

Your reference: ██████████

Wednesday 2 December 2015

Mr Alan P Walsh  
HM Area Coroner  
Manchester West  
HM Coroner's Court  
Paderborn House  
Howell Croft North  
Bolton, BL1 1QY

**Private and confidential**

Dear Mr Walsh

Re Suzanne Greenwood - Deceased

Thank you for your letter dated Monday 12 October 2015 in which you enclosed your report to prevent future deaths under paragraph 7, schedule 5 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013. Your letter was addressed to ██████████ Manager Director Priory Group Healthcare Division and ██████████ Consultant Psychiatrist. It is upon their behalf and on behalf of the Priory Group Healthcare Division that I reply.

You have asked that the following actions are taken:

1. You asked that a review is carried out of the systems, procedures, policies and protocols in relation to contact with patients who fail to attend appointments.

Upon receipt of your report we undertook a review of this matter. It is relevant in this case that ██████████ is a Consultant Psychiatrist with 'Practising Privileges' meaning that he undertakes his work at Altrincham Hospital as an independent doctor seeing outpatients whilst making use of the facilities at the hospital for example the consulting rooms and IT equipment.

A policy is in place which outlines the expectations of those doctors who work in this way: Policy H105: Practising Privileges for Independent Doctors.

The policy makes it clear that independent doctors should work in accordance with General Medical Council requirements and relevant Priory Healthcare Division policies and procedures. The policy states that a contract must be signed by the applicable Hospital Medical Director and the particular doctor prior to that person commencing work as an independent doctor.

The policy also notes that the independent doctor should avail themselves of supervision and appraisal.

We have identified that there are policies in place which govern the admission, transfer and discharge of patients. These policies give details of the requirement to communicate in an effective and timely way with General Practitioners and others who may be involved with the patient. As part of our review we identified that the requirement to communicate in an effective and timely way with General Practitioners and others who may be involved with the patient needed to be strengthened in Policy H105 which as I have stated is the particular policy relevant to independent doctors

2. You asked that a review is carried out of the systems , procedures, policies and protocols in relation to patients who repeatedly fail to attend appointments and to consider a final letter to the patient indicating that the patient will be discharged unless there is either contact or an appointment made within a defined period;

and

3. That a review is carried out of the systems, procedures, policies and protocols in relation to the discharge of patients who repeatedly fail to attend appointments with notifications to General Practitioners or other relevant health professionals of the patient's failure to attend appointments and their discharge from hospital. The review should consider timescales in relation to discharge when a patient has failed to attend appointments for a specific period of time.

In response to 2 and 3 please note that we have given full consideration to these matters and have now made the following requirements explicit in Policy H105: Practising Privileges for Independent Doctors:

- That the independent doctor will complete a final letter to the patient in those instances where there has been a repeated failure to attend appointments either with or without notice having been given by the patient. The letter must be copied to other relevant professionals involved in the patient's care for example the General Practitioner. The letter should give detail of the patient's medication, recommendations for after care and identify the possible actions to be taken in the event of the patient experiencing a crisis. The letter should also identify possible options for the patient to pursue should they need more routine assistance in the future and these options could include visiting their General Practitioner and/or re-referring themselves to the independent doctor.
- That the independent doctor will complete and send a discharge letter to the General Practitioner and other relevant professionals after the final contact with the patient in those instances where the patient has failed to attend appointments. The letter should give detail of the patient's medication, the recommendations for after care and as with the first bullet point above identify possible actions to be taken by the General Practitioner should the patient experience a future crisis. The letter should be copied to the patient. Prompt telephone contact should be made with the General Practitioner in those instances where there are deeper concerns about the patient.

We have taken the following actions in relation to giving advice to our independent doctors about the requirements and the adjustments outlined above:

1. The amended Policy H105: Practising Privileges for Independent Doctors has been circulated electronically across the Healthcare Division with voting buttons to acknowledge receipt.
2. Our group Medical Director [REDACTED] has notified Hospital Medical Directors of this requirement and has asked that the discharge of patients is routinely discussed during supervision and appraisal with Independent Doctors.
3. The improvements made in response to your report will be included in the forthcoming Learning Lessons Bulletin which will be circulated in early 2016.
4. The amendments to the policy and the background to those amendments will be raised at the Medical Directors Meeting to be held on Tuesday 26 January 2016.

I hope that you will be assured of the actions taken in respect of this matter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Director of Safety



Your reference: APW/CAH/3821-2014

Tuesday 8 December 2015

Mr Alan P Walsh  
HM Area Coroner  
Manchester West  
HM Coroner's Court  
Paderborn House  
Howell Croft North  
Bolton  
BL1 1QY

**Private and Confidential**

Dear Mr Walsh

Re Suzanne Greenwood - Deceased

Thank you for your letter dated Monday 12 October 2015; I have reflected on this matter and discussed it with my peer group.

In light of your report to prevent future deaths under paragraph 7, schedule 5 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, I have worked with Priory Group Management and wider improvements have been made to ensure that lessons are learnt so that similar incidents do not happen again.



Moving forward, I will ensure that for all of my patients, after their initial consultation (following first referral or discharge from in-patient), if they do not attend their next appointment, they will be given a further appointment. A copy of this letter will also be sent to their GP. Should they fail to attend a further letter will be sent to the patient and their GP.

If there are concerns about the patient then telephone contact will be made and a follow up letter sent as required. The GP will be given further instructions regarding what to do in terms of medication/further management and advised, if appropriate, to refer the patient to NHS secondary services.

The GP will also be given the option to re-refer the patient in future should this be necessary.

I hope this meets your approval.

Yours sincerely

  
  
Consultant Psychiatrist

Your reference: APW/CAH/3821-2014

RECEIVED

Wednesday 9 December 2015

10 DEC 2015

Mr Alan P Walsh  
HM Area Coroner  
Manchester West  
HM Coroner's Court  
Paderborn House  
Howell Croft North  
Bolton, BL1 1QY

**Private and confidential**

Dear Mr Walsh

Re Suzanne Greenwood - Deceased

Thank you for your letter dated Monday 12 October 2015 in which you enclosed your report to prevent future deaths under paragraph 7, schedule 5 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013. Your report was directed to [REDACTED], Consultant Psychiatrist and myself.

I am aware that [REDACTED] Director of Safety has provided you with a response on behalf of the company however you have specified that you would like to receive an individual response from both [REDACTED] and myself.

You have asked that a review is carried out of the systems, procedures, policies and protocols in relation to contact with patients who fail to attend appointments.

Upon receipt of your report I asked that a review was undertaken of this matter.

Please note that [REDACTED] is one of our Consultant Psychiatrists with 'Practising Privileges'. This means that he undertakes his work at Altrincham Hospital as an independent doctor seeing outpatients whilst making use of the facilities at the hospital for example the consulting rooms and the IT systems and equipment.

Policy H105: Practising Privileges for Independent Doctors is clear that independent doctors should work in accordance with General Medical Council requirements and relevant Priory Healthcare Division policies and procedures. This includes participating in regular supervision and appraisal. The policy also states that a contract must be signed by the applicable Hospital Medical Director and the particular doctor prior to that person commencing work as an independent doctor.

As part of our review we identified that the requirement to communicate in an effective and timely way with General Practitioners and others who may be involved with the patient needed to be strengthened in Policy H105.

You asked that a review is carried out of the systems, procedures, policies and protocols in relation to patients who repeatedly fail to attend appointments and to consider a final letter to the patient indicating that with notifications to General Practitioners or other relevant health professionals of the patient's failure to attend appointments and their discharge from hospital the patient will be discharged unless there is either contact or an appointment made within a defined period. You also asked that a review is carried out of the systems, procedures, policies and protocols in relation to the discharge of patients who repeatedly fail to attend appointments. You asked that the review should consider timescales in relation to discharge when a patient has failed to attend appointments for a specific period of time.

Please note that we have given our full consideration to these matters and have now made it clear in Policy H105: Practising Privileges for Independent Doctors that the independent doctor must complete a final letter to the patient where there has been a repeated failure to attend appointments either with or without notice having been given by the patient. We have specified that the letter must be copied to other professionals involved in the patient's care for example the General Practitioner. The letter must give detail of the patient's medication, recommendations for after care and outline the actions to be taken in the event of the patient experiencing a crisis in the future. The letter should also identify possible options for the patient to pursue should they need more routine assistance in the future and these options could include visiting their General Practitioner and/or re-referring themselves to the independent doctor. In the amended policy we have also identified that the independent doctor should make prompt telephone contact with the General Practitioner in those instances where there are particular concerns about the patient in those instances where the patient has failed to attend appointments. The independent doctor should also as a minimum complete and send a discharge letter to the General Practitioner and other relevant professionals after the final contact with the patient. The letter must provide detail of the patient's medication, the recommendations for aftercare and identify possible actions to be taken by the General Practitioner should the patient experience a future crisis. The letter should be copied to the patient.

A number of actions have been taken in relation to giving advice to the independent doctors about the requirements and the adjustments outlined above:

1. The amended Policy H105: Practising Privileges for Independent Doctors has been circulated electronically across the Healthcare Division.
2. The group Medical Director [REDACTED] has notified Hospital Medical Directors of this requirement and has asked that the discharge of patients is routinely discussed during supervision and appraisal with Independent Doctors.
3. The improvements made in response to your report will be included in the forthcoming Learning Lessons Bulletin which will be circulated in early 2016.
4. The amendments to the policy and the background to those amendments will be raised at the Medical Directors Meeting to be held in January 2016.

I hope that you will be assured of the actions taken in respect of this matter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely



Trevor Torrington  
Chief Executive Officer, Priory Healthcare