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**Department  
of Health &  
Social Care**

*From Jackie Doyle-Price MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Mental Health,  
Inequalities and Suicide Prevention*

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Your Ref: MDF-HK/251-2018  
Our Ref: PFD-1158450

Mr Martin Fleming  
HM Senior Coroner, West Yorkshire (Western)  
HM Coroners' Office  
City Courts  
The Tyrls  
Bradford BD1 1LA

March 2019

*Dear Mr. Fleming,*

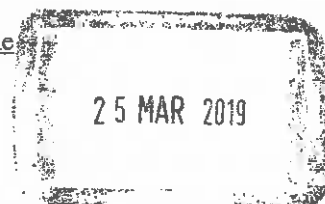
Thank you for your correspondence of 26 November 2018 to the Department of Health and Social Care about the death of Ursula Niamh MacEochaigh Keogh. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), and I am grateful for the extra time in which to do so.

Your report raises three matters of concern and is directed to NHS Calderdale Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Calderdale Council, as well as the Department of Health and Social Care. I am aware that the Calderdale CCG has responded to your concerns from a local perspective, advising you of a series of actions that are being undertaken in light of the report. We expect the local NHS to take action to respond to concerns and learn from deaths to ensure the safety of healthcare services and I am encouraged that the local NHS is looking into these matters carefully.

It may be helpful if I set out work undertaken nationally to help local services work together to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people experiencing mental health difficulties.

*Future in Mind*<sup>1</sup>, published by the Department and NHS England in 2015, set out a consensus across the NHS, public health, local authorities, social care, schools and youth justice sectors to work together to promote good mental health, prevention and early intervention; improve access; and deliver a clear, joined-up approach. This led

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-mental-health-services-for-young-people>



to the development of Local Transformation Plans that set out how local services would work together to deliver improved outcomes. The *Five Year Forward View for Mental Health*<sup>2</sup>, published in February 2016, reconfirmed the vision set out in *Future in Mind*.

In November 2018, the Department for Education produced an update to its guidance, *Mental health and behaviour in schools*<sup>3</sup>, that includes risk and protective factors for children and young people, including identifying children with possible mental health problems. Guidance is also given on making referrals to CAMHS quickly and efficiently, and allowing pupils to access CAMHS at school.

All health professionals, including GPs, are required to take account of guidance issued by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). The NICE *Quality Standard for Self-Harm*, QS34<sup>4</sup> was published in 2013 and includes guidance that people, including those aged eight to 18, who have self-harmed, should have an initial assessment of physical health, mental state, safeguarding concerns, social circumstances and risks of repetition or suicide; and that people receiving continuing support for self-harm have a collaboratively developed risk management plan.

Turning to your recommendations specifically, the Department agrees that communication between health and education professionals needs to be improved. *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper*<sup>5</sup>, jointly published with the Department for Education in December 2017, brings together health and education to provide early intervention mental health support for children and improve communication between health and education professionals.

On 20 December 2018, the Government announced the first wave of 25 trailblazer sites that will test the plans set out in the Green Paper. These new plans will significantly increase the availability of mental health support to children and young people, including creating new Mental Health Support Teams working in and near schools and colleges to support children and young people with mild to moderate mental health conditions. Mental Health Support Teams will provide brand new

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Mental-Health-Taskforce-FYFV-final.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/755135/Mental\\_health\\_and\\_behaviour\\_in\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755135/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs34/resources>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>

services situated in schools and colleges and are intended to offer earlier help and intervention. For example, linking up with existing mental health services which may include local troubled families' coordinators; educational psychologists; school nurses; health visitors; local children's services; school counsellors; and voluntary and community sector provision.

The Department agrees with your recommendation highlighting the importance of preventative measures and I welcome the measures being taken by Calderdale Council to install preventative measures at the North Bridge Halifax by the end of May 2019. One of the key areas for action in the cross-government Suicide Prevention Strategy is to reduce access to the means of suicide which is known to be one of the most effective methods of preventing suicide, and this includes those places that we know about across the country that are frequently used for suicide.

You may also wish to note that the Government published the first cross-Government Suicide Prevention Workplan in January 2019 which set out an ambitious programme to reduce suicides, including in children and young people<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, setting up 24/7 crisis care provision for children, young people and their families is a key priority for the Government in the NHS Long Term Plan<sup>7</sup>, published on 7 January 2019. All children and young people experiencing crisis will be able to access crisis care 24 hours a day, seven days a week by 2023/24 via NHS111.

Finally, although you do not raise this issue in your report, I am aware that Ursula's family have expressed concern about the role of harmful suicide and self-harm content on social media in relation to Ursula's death.

The Department is very concerned about the impact of this sort of content and is working with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the online sector to address this. Our ambition is to make the UK the safest place to be online and we are working with internet and social media providers to tackle online harms such as these.

You may be aware that the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, wrote to social media providers in January to express his concern about suicide and self-harm content on their platforms. I also met social media providers in February, alongside the Secretary of State, and they have committed to step-up their efforts to protect their users from harmful suicidal and self-harm content online. We are also taking action through the forthcoming joint DCMS and Home Office Online

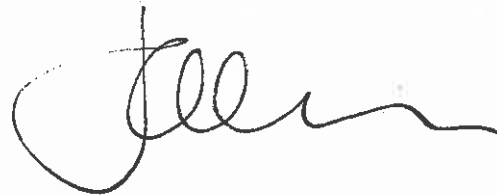
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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-cross-government-plan>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/>

Harms White Paper, which will set out a range of legislative and non-legislative measures detailing how the Government will tackle online harms.

I hope this information is helpful. Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jackie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**JACKIE DOYLE-PRICE**